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HELOISE.

HELOISE,

OR

THE UNREVEALED SECRET.

A Tale.

BY TALVI.

"Greift nur hinein in's volle Menschenleben:
Ein Jeder lebt's, nicht Vielen ist's bekannt—
Und wo Ihr's fasst, da ist es interessant."
GOETHE'S *Faust*.

"Grasp but into the full of human life:
'Tis lived by all, 'tis known by few, at best—
And, seize it where you will, there's interest."

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HELOISE.

CHAPTER I.

THE MEETING.

It was between ten and twenty years ago, in the latter part of autumn, and evening had already commenced, when Heloise von Waldeck entered the gates of the capital. "Oh, look! just look, miss!" cried the maid, who was seated by her side, again and again, "just see the big houses, and the beautiful ladies, and that handsome officer!"

The young lady's looks followed, mechanically, the direction of Lisette's forefinger, but her eye only saw, only her ear heard; her mind and heart were occupied with very different things. The passers by laughed, stood still, and manifested much amusement at the curiosity of the girl, the old-fashioned coach, and the peasant on the box, who, scolding and swearing at the crowd which hindered his progress, and at the endless number of long streets, made inquiries from time to time, in a strange dialect, with regard to the street and the number of the house where his journey was to end. The laughter of many, however, was changed to a smile of admiration, as their eye fell on the lovely, blooming face of Heloise, which peeped out in pleasant contrast from under her crape mourning hat. The young lady, seeing how much

attention she attracted, dropped her veil, leaned back in a corner, and without taking any further notice of Lisette's exclamations, gave herself up, while the carriage rolled slowly on, to the half joyous half sorrowful emotions of her heart.

"Felix, my Felix!" she said to herself, "at length I shall see you again! after a separation, and so painful a one, of a long year, we are again to meet; but ah! how impoverished! What a disclosure have I to make to you! How will you receive it? Will it startle you? Will you rejoice at it? No, no," she continued, blushing, "you will not rejoice at it, you *cannot;* for however much you love me, and in whatever relation I may stand to you in future, yet, I feel it in my inmost heart, I can never be to you, nor you to me, more than we have hitherto been to each other! my friend, my brother, my——all! But by whatever name I may, perhaps, once call you, that of *brother* will always be to me the dearest, the holiest, for was it not the first by which I learned to love you?"

At length the carriage stopped before a large house. "This must be the place," said the driver, descending from his seat.

"I wonder if Mr. Felix is already with Madame?" said Lisette.

"As he does not know that we are coming to-day, it would be a mere accident," replied Heloise. She did not notice that Lisette had already asked the above question three times that day. How ardently did she hope that this accident might have happened!

Madame von Pollwitz, an early friend of Heloise's mother, met her guest in the hall, and tears filled her eyes as she embraced the young orphan. "It is not the face and form of my Amelie," said she, examining Heloise attentively, "but I am sure her heart is there."

Heloise bowed over her hand: "Friend of the loved de-

parted one," she began with trembling voice; but her hostess interrupted her.

"Do not give way to your emotion, my child," she said, "time will bring you consolation! It is in the course of nature that mothers die before their children."

Heloise's tears ceased flowing as she listened to these well-meant commonplaces. Madame von Pollwitz, meanwhile, turned to the servant: "Bring in the young lady's baggage; show the maid her room; assist her as far as you can, and when you have finished, go and let Mr. von Waldeck know that his sister has arrived."

Lisette, who stood behind her, looked at Heloise: "Ah! Madame," she said, boldly, "begging your pardon, please let the gentleman go to young master before we take up the things. My young lady has been half crazy with impatience all the way."

Heloise blushed, and Madame von Pollwitz gave the maid a rather haughty look. "Very well," she replied, "go immediately, then. Come, my dear," she continued, turning to Heloise and taking her arm, "come in; you will find my daughter with me. She has been married several years, as you probably know. She is going to a party in the neighborhood this evening, and came in to see me for a few moments, on her way there."

When they entered the drawing-room, a lady in a tasteful fashionable evening dress came to meet them. She had a small, delicate figure, the thinness of which was skilfully disguised by puffs and folds, and a spiritual little face, which had, in spite of a very high color, something ethereal.

"Have I not a right to grow proud," she said to her mother, with a sweet smile, "when I learn to recognize prophetic powers in myself? This morning my little finger foretold me that our young friend would come to-day, in spite of the assurances to the contrary of her brother, whom sympathy ought

to have taught better. But these men are too grossly organized for such things!"

"Then my brother does not expect me to-day?" asked Heloise in a low voice.

"He had got the idea fixed in his head this morning, that you would not come until to-morrow. Do send for him, mamma, he cannot have gone yet. He is probably just in the midst of his toilet. Your arrival, Miss von Waldeck, gives him an excellent pretext to absent himself from a party, from which he could not, reasonably at least, expect any thing but a stupid evening and a sleepless night."

"Is your husband to be there?" asked her mother.

"I cannot say," she replied with indifference, "I have not seen him since yesterday noon."

Her mother looked dissatisfied, but the daughter went on in the same tone: "You know very well that is nothing new. He did not come home last night till two hours past midnight. I was already asleep; and this morning, when I rose, he was not yet awake. Nothing whatever can keep me from my morning walk with the children, and when I returned, he had gone to his office. He dined to-day at the Russian ambassador's, or at President Retzer's, or—I'm sure I don't know where. So it was all very natural."

Both the ladies were silent for a while. Madame von Pollwitz put an end to the pause by asking Heloise some question about her journey. But there was no time for an answer; the door flew open, a tall, handsome young man rushed into the room. Heloise uttered a loud scream, and was clasped, trembling with mingled joy and sadness, in Felix's arms.

"My own girl, have you come at last!" he cried, kissing and embracing her heartily. "Have I got you again, my darling, sweet, lovely little sister? You're well, I hope? And do you love me as much as ever?"

Thus questions, exclamations, caresses, followed one another, until the blushing Heloise succeeded in extricating herself from his arms. Without speaking, she pointed to the two ladies, who stood looking at them with laughing eyes. He colored, and made a low bow.

"Pardon me, ladies!" he said.

"With all my heart," interrupted Isabella, by which name we will call the daughter; "I assure you that none of your civilities ever pleased me as much as this incivility. Come, mamma, I have something to tell you; and here, at any rate, we are quite superfluous."

The ladies had hardly left the room, before Felix was again about to give way to his delight. But Heloise turned to him with a serious look, and said significantly, "Felix, the moment of our meeting is truly not one of joy alone!"

A cloud came over Felix's laughing face, tears sprang to his eyes. "Ah! Heloise," he said, "do not think me unfeeling, if I rejoice more in present happiness than grieve at past misfortune."

"Past misfortune, my dear brother?" replied Heloise, sadly; "the death of a beloved one is never a past misfortune. At the most, only the moment of separation can be called so. But the continued longing for those we have lost, the missing them every where, these are present sufferings, and such as last during our whole life."

"You are right, sister," said Felix, gravely; "it is a great misfortune that we have lost our dear, good mother, our dearest friend, our wisest counsellor, so early. You know that I have shed many tears for her, and I never shall think of her without the deepest emotion. But—let me be frank, as always—I cannot help it, if I think of her less than I did six months ago. I cannot help it, if I am happy once more, Heloise; happier than ever! indescribably happy! I am sure our sainted mother will forgive me; she rejoices at it.

And now, too, you are with me again, you dear, faithful little sister!"

However much there might be in these words that was painful to Heloise's feelings, the frankness and honesty of the declaration touched and conciliated her, and she could not refrain from returning the embrace which accompanied the last words, with fervor. A quarter of an hour had passed away in affectionate conversation, when Isabella entered the room softly. "It is time for me to go," she said in excuse, "and I had to get my shawl and gloves"

Felix started: "So late already?" cried he.

"Of course you are absolved for this evening, my dear Waldeck. I will take your excuse to the chamberlain."

"You are very kind," he answered, slightly embarrassed; "but it would not do very well for me to stay away entirely."

"What an idea! You are not going to leave your sister alone the very evening of her arrival, I hope."

"My sister wants rest," he replied, more and more disconcerted. "She is tired; I shall not go before ten o'clock, when it would be time for her to retire, at any rate."

"How considerate! Your sister tired? Look at her; is there fatigue in those eyes?"

"My connections—"

"That sounds suspicious! I should like to know what secret connections you have with our courtiers, Sir Secretary of the Legation?"

"I have refused several invitations from that family; if I should be missed again to-night—"

"Missed! Waldeck, are you provincial, or vain? At such assemblies, where crowds intermingle, individuals are not missed. Therefore be unconcerned, my dear sir! I will excuse you."

"Do not trouble yourself, madam!" replied Felix, in a

cold and vexed tone; "I shall make my appearance in person at ten o'clock."

"Very well," she said, smiling; "if you will deem yourself indispensable! As for you, my dear young lady, I wish you a better night than I shall have. When your love for your brother leaves you time to take notice of any one besides him, I shall endeavor to obtain your friendship, which in my opinion is an invaluable treasure, and—I feel it—I have the means of winning this treasure." So saying, she pressed her hand warmly, and with a look so full of soul, that Heloise involuntarily returned the pressure. "*Au revoir, monsieur!*" Isabella continued, turning to Felix, and then, with a graceful courtesy, she left the room.

Felix and Heloise sat for a while in silence. "A very charming woman," said Heloise, at last.

"Very sensible and clever," replied Felix, "if she only would not make good her superiority by that disagreeable, tutoring tone which she so often assumes, especially towards young men."

"But, dear Felix, is it absolutely necessary that you should go to-night?"

"If you wish me to stay with you longer than ten o'clock, dear Heloise, I will do it with all my heart."

"No, no, Felix; go, of course, if it gives you pleasure."

"There is no idea of any pleasure in this case. It will be a stiff, tiresome affair. I only thought that it would probably be better for you to retire early."

"Yes, dear Felix, do go. I shall see you again to-morrow, besides."

"And then every day, dear. But if you want me to stay—"

"No, indeed; no, do go! Let us talk of something else. Tell me, does the young baroness live happily with her husband?"

"I don't believe that she is exactly unhappy, although he is an intolerable fellow; shallow, cold, and, so they say, faithless to his wife."

"To that intellectual, lovely woman?"

"Hum! lovely only in the evening. She is said to have been very beautiful; now she calls art to aid. She paints, as you could see."

"To excuse that, Felix, you need only think of our mother, who, as she has often told us, was obliged to do so while she was at court."

"I don't object to it," he answered, with a smile; "but you, too, I hope, have nothing against my assuring you that I like your unpainted cheeks a thousand times better."

With this he gave the blushing girl a hearty kiss. Shortly after, their hostess rejoined them. The conversation led her back to the time when the good old lady, like Felix's mother, was at court in attendance on the young Princess Antonia, and she had so many little traits to tell of these two, that her young friends listened with heartfelt emotion, particularly Heloise, who was visibly touched by these reminiscences. The old lady's anecdotes, however, only related to the time previous to her marriage, which removed her from court, and brought her to her present residence. She was several years older than the other two, who were connected by the closest ties of friendship. Several years later she had revisited the court of her native country, and had been delighted with the ripened beauty of the princess. Just at that time, too, the young Countess Staden had been married to Mr. von Waldeck, who was considerably older than she, but a very excellent and very rich man, of whom Felix had a very indistinct recollection, and whom Heloise had never known. At this wedding, too, the brother of the bride, a proud, stately officer, who had taken an active part

in the late war of deliverance, and had distinguished himself highly in the field, made his appearance at court.

"My visit," said Madame von Pollwitz, "revived my correspondence with your mother in some measure. But, as is so often the case, our letters grew less and less frequent. The misfortune of the princess seemed, by degrees, to occupy your mother's whole heart. But I was very much affected when I heard at last, from some travellers, that the princess was, so to say, exiled, your mother separated from her, and when no one could tell me any thing certain about the fate of your uncle, of whom an obscure report said that he had gone to Russia. Long afterwards I have heard much said about a Russian General Staden, who signalized himself in the wars with the Turks and Persians. Probably that is your uncle? If so, I suppose that while he has received new wounds, the old ones of his heart have been healed."

"It is indeed our uncle," replied Felix, "about whom the papers have had so much to say. Our mother mentioned him but seldom, but when she did so, it was with the warmest affection. I remember him very well: he was an ardent, noble-looking man; and when I call to mind his energetic, warlike appearance, I can hardly understand what could ever have induced him to occupy the post of chamberlain."

"There was something strange in the whole affair. When I saw him, he showed very plainly that, although a native, he thought every thing at the court of his prince too limited. He only came on a visit, and with the intention of entering into the service of my present sovereign. A short time after my return hither, I was not a little astonished at hearing that he had turned chamberlain."

"I know nothing nearer about it; mother always maintained a strict silence with regard to it. It seems, however, not towards Heloise, for I have just noticed that she is sitting there with a crimson face, and her eyes on the ground."

"We will not trouble her with inquiries," said the good lady, and proceeded with her stories. Meanwhile ten o'clock drew near, and Felix grew more and more uneasy. Heloise noticed it.

"Is it not time for you to go, brother?" she said.

"Are you tired, darling?" he inquired, with some embarrassment.

"No—and still—yes, I am tired. I shall soon ask Madame to excuse me. But, besides that, you will be too late if you stay longer."

"Oh! I'm in no hurry; I shall be there in time," said Felix, rising, while every motion showed that he was endeavoring to restrain his impatience.

At length, with a tender "good night," they parted.

Madame von Pollwitz soon after conducted Heloise to the apartment designed for her. It was a pleasant little room, with a light closet adjoining, in which she and her maid were to sleep. The latter was still occupied with unpacking and putting in order, and full of remarks about the domestics of the house, with which her mouth overflowed.

While she was chatting away, Heloise undressed herself, and sundry reflections crowded in among the blissful sensations with which joy at the meeting had filled her heart. "He ought not to have gone," she said to herself,—"but am I not unjust in blaming him? Here, in this large city, at court, it is not as with us in the country, where every one can follow the dictates of his heart. How often has mother told me of how much importance circumstances, connections are, among the great world. And how cordial, how affectionate he was! Just the same as ever! No; if any thing in his behavior could pain me, it was the little sorrow which the memory of his exemplary mother seemed to awaken in him. And yet, should I not rejoice that he is happy? And oh! am I not happy with him? To-morrow, in a quiet hour, I will tell him of the

death of the dear departed one, repeat what I have already written him, and weep with him. Then, perhaps, he will ask the question which I have so long expected, whether she has not left any documents for him; I shall give him the paper—and—he will know all!"

With these thoughts, accompanied by many tears, she fell asleep. Poor child! The first night among strangers was to be her last happy one for a long time. With her heart full of hope, and her body fatigued by her journey, she slept sweetly and soundly. We, meanwhile, will give the reader an account of her former circumstances, as well as of those which brought her to her present abode.

For this purpose we must look very far back.

CHAPTER II.

HELOISE'S HISTORY.

In one of the most beautiful regions of Germany, on a lonely manor, there lived, some time ago, the widowed Amelie von Waldeck, bestowing her entire time and attention on the education of two lovely children, a boy and girl.

She fulfilled this duty with so much sense, so much ardor, that she was as worthy of the esteem as of the love of all who knew her. Manifold occupations, and the wild beauties of nature by which she was surrounded, easily consoled her for her banishment (in consequence of having incurred the anger of her prince) from a court for which she had been educated, and where she had spent the greater part of her life.

The circumstances were these: some years before—when her son, Felix, was seven, and her little daughter, Heloise, only three years old—the old prince discovered that his daughter, the Princess Antonia, whose rejection of every suitor had long been vexatious to him, had, about four years before, been secretly married to her chamberlain, Count Staden, and that the sister of the latter, since three years the widow of Mr. von Waldeck, had been the confidante of the whole affair. The count escaped the just displeasure of his sovereign by leaving the country. He went to Russia, entered the army there, to seek death in his despair, but found honor and fame, and indeed, in gradual oblivion, a new though limited happiness.

The princess met her father's fury with respectful firmness. Her marriage, on her assurance that she had no chil-

lren, was declared invalid. But no prayers, no threats, could nduce her to give her hand to a neighboring prince, who had offered himself to her.

Fearing to make the scandalous secret known, if he used orcible means, her father at last desisted, and allowed her o lament the loss of her love at a country seat in the vicinity f the capital. It was in vain, however, that she endeavored o obtain permission for Madame von Waldeck, who was banished from court, to accompany her. She showed her father letters which contained indubitable proof that her friend had not only not approved of her private marriage, but had done all that was in her power to prevent it; and only when it had, nevertheless, taken place without her knowledge, she had consented to become the confidante of the lovers. All was in vain! The moral superiority of the young widow had long made her an object of hatred to some of the old prince's influential officers. She retired to the estates which her deceased husband had left to his little son, whose guardian she was. Heloise was not born till some months after Mr. von Waldeck's death, while his young widow, in order to pass the mourning year in solitude, was residing on one of her most distant estates, and the princess, whose health was very bad, was with her on a visit. With many tears the two friends parted now, separated by the prince's anger, and Amelie, who was the more composed of the two, was obliged to tear little Heloise forcibly from the arms of the princess. Some years later, the tears of the latter obtained for her the privilege of an annual visit from her friend, who never neglected to bring the children, who were then loaded with caresses and presents, and always revelled, for months beforehand, in the joyful anticipation of this journey.

The overwise courtiers may have been right when they conjectured that the princess had a nearer interest in the charming little Heloise. However, she could not have trusted

her duties and rights in better hands than in those of Madame von Waldeck. The two children were educated with a degree of wisdom which was hardly to be looked for in a young lady brought up at court. Felix, the legacy of an honored husband, and Heloise, bequeathed to her by a beloved brother, were equally dear to her heart. But thirty years of age, of prepossessing appearance, and rich, the world, with all its joys and treasures, still lay before her; but she willingly gave up all for these little ones. Fortune had bestowed upon her, in the person of the minister of the village, an able assistant, and at the same time a noble-hearted friend, whose intercourse gave her the means of developing herself more and more, and thus capacitated her better for the education of her children. It had become the warmest wish of her heart to bring up these two innocent beings, not only with, but also for, each other.

Her brother, as well as the princess, gave their joyful consent to this plan. The count had no fortune, and Heloise could not expect to be an heiress, for her mother's jewels and other things of value would, at her death, fall back upon the old prince. The milder sentiments of his future successor gave room for the hope that he would recall the count; and in the certainty, grounded on his well-known character, that he would not hate his sister's child, it was hoped that the stratagem might then be brought to light. Madame von Waldeck resolved, therefore, to treat the children as brother and sister until after the death of the old prince, which was seemingly not very far off, partly for Heloise's security, partly to keep up between them an entirely unconstrained intercourse. Circumstances, but still more the tender and almost unexampled love which the children manifested for each other, favored her plans.

The situation of Castle Waldeck was in the highest degree lonely and remote, and the few neighbors that it had,

bailiffs and ignorant country squires, were hardly fit intercourse for its mistress. Years passed away, and Felix saw no other child than Heloise, Heloise none but him. The boy seldom took advantage of the permission which he had, sometimes to play at soldier with the village boys, because then he had to leave his sister, and her quiet, firm, and affectionate disposition soon gave her a considerable influence over the thoughtless, mischievous little fellow. He often tyrannized her by his impetuosity, and hurt her feelings by his wild heedlessness, but he always found means to obtain her ready forgiveness by insinuating words and assurances of repentance. With his feelings so susceptible to every impression, with his reckless spirit, and fiery temper, Madame von Waldeck looked forward with much anxiety to the time when, too old for the instructions of the minister and his tutor, he must go to the university. Providence had also favored her exceedingly in the choice of a tutor, by sending her a worthy and highly educated young man, who, besides, was able to instruct Felix in those chivalrous exercises which are an ornament to a man, and for which Felix, although he had a good head, and fine abilities for learning, as for every thing else, manifested a strong predilection. He was soon before his master in riding, fencing, and shooting; for the latter he was particularly capacitated by a steady hand and correct eye. He little dreamt that the skill which he acquired in this art was to be of the greatest use to him somewhat later, at one of the most important moments of his life.

The time for the separation came at last. Eighteen years of age, rich, handsome, hot-headed—what dangers was he not exposed to! Felix himself had long since thought with a secret longing of this first step into the world, but when he saw the tears rising in Heloise's eye, a sadness came over his heart, and he tried to hide, by the most crazy pranks, the emotion of which he was ashamed. But when Heloise

took his hand, and looking at him with her dove-like eyes, prayed, "Ah! Felix, do not jest when I weep!" he would throw himself sobbing into her arms, and promise her and himself to write to her every week, and to come and see her regularly in the vacations. The pastor's wife, who was not, like her husband, in the secret, was once witness of a similar scene. "Well, Miss Heloise," she said, laughing; "it can't always be so. Some time or other, when a handsome gentleman comes and takes you home with him, you will have to be separated from your brother, at any rate."

But—"No," cried the little girl, eagerly; "no—I shall never marry; I never could love a husband as much as I do Felix!" Her friend smiled, and said, "We will wait a few years!" But Madame von Waldeck witnessed this tenderness with inward joy.

Sadder than ever, Felix at length bid adieu to the home where he left behind him so much love. But he soon thought he had reason to be convinced that he found as much in the circle of companions which awaited him. He made so many friendships, that Heloise was delighted, and his mother did not know whether she should be pleased or anxious. Among ladies, however, he did not feel as much at home. "None of the girls," he wrote to Heloise, in his laconic style, "please me; compared with you, at least, they are all not worth much. None of them is as pretty, none as sensible, and, particularly, not one as good as you." His sister read it with burning cheeks, and proved to him in her answer that she was neither pretty nor sensible, that she only had a good heart, and that in that heart he, above all others, had a large place. The mother, seeing him so favorably inclined, took good care not to make him, by untimely warnings against love intrigues, anxious to see whether forbidden fruit is in reality as sweet as it is said to be.

Felix, after an absence of half a year, had enjoyed the

meeting with his loved ones heartily; and his second visit, in the following spring, was being looked forward to with the greatest impatience, when, suddenly, a letter arrived from one of the ladies of the Princess Antonia, informing Madame von Waldeck of the critical state of her noble friend's health, and expressing the wish of the latter that she should come to her without delay. Grief had long been undermining her constitution with diligent hands, and some outward circumstances had now suddenly endangered her life. Seeing death, which she had longed for with a morbid enthusiasm, brought so near, she desired to bid farewell to her friend, and to press Heloise, her dearest treasure in this world, to her heart once more before she should depart.

Madame von Waldeck, bowed down by violent grief, set out on her journey immediately. Heloise wept by her side, for she dearly loved the beautiful, pale lady, whose look of sadness was brightened by a ray of tender affection when it fell on her. When the travellers arrived, the princess was past all hope. The prince royal was with her. His sister had told him all, and, as a last favor, had asked and received the promise that he would recall Count Staden as soon as it was in his power, and acknowledge Heloise as his and her legitimate child. Madame von Waldeck now thought that she ought not to keep the sad secret from Heloise any longer; for it seemed to her cruel to deprive her of the precious moment in which she could embrace her mother for the last time. In the arms of the weeping girl the princess breathed her last, blessing her, and admonishing her to obey her foster-mother in all things, and to love her banished, unhappy father.

Unspeakably wretched did poor Heloise feel the next day, as she sat beside Madame von Waldeck in the carriage, on their homeward journey; for the remains of the princess had been taken to the capital, where the solemn obsequies

were to be held, and friend and daughter were not allowed to follow them. In one moment she had lost two mothers and a brother! How alone did she suddenly stand in the world! For her father was many hundred miles off—she had never seen him; he had never given her any proof that he loved her. Her friend let her weep undisturbed. But when, the next day, arrived at home, she saw her giving way to a strange melancholy, she remonstrated with her seriously and kindly, and asked her whether the care and attention which she had bestowed on her for so many years, did not make her worthy of the name of mother? Heloise threw herself, weeping bitterly, into her arms, and cried, "Oh! my mother! yes—you are a mother to me! I have felt it a thousand times in my inmost heart that you are. Have you not watched over me during my whole life, with more than a mother's care? Did you not plant, by a thousand blessings and marks of affection, the warmest filial love in my heart? Why should I not be your daughter?"

"You are," said Madame von Waldeck, with emotion, and pressed her to her breast; "for love is the strongest tie. At one time your helplessness chained me to you, and now your amiability; the purity of your soul has made the bonds indissoluble. What more could a mother say to you? Blood! they say? Does not the blood of a beloved brother flow in your veins? and is that not also mine? Yes, my Heloise! the two beings whom Heaven has placed nearest to me in this world, belong also to you. Your father is the oldest friend of my heart, and your brother—"

Heloise turned pale, and averting her face, "My brother," she repeated. "Ah, he is no more my brother! Oh, mother! never let him know it. Dearest mother, let me always be his sister—let me never be a stranger to him!"

"My child," replied Madame von Waldeck, and her tone grew by degrees more and more solemn; "may he ever be

your—may you be his—dearest friend. This is my wish, it is that of your father; it is the prayer of your departed mother. You have lost a brother to gain a bridegroom. Yes, blush, my Heloise. I consider you as one of the most fortunate of your sex; for you are the first and only love of your beloved. Not romantic blindness, not unoccupied imagination, not inordinate desire, have given him to you. He knows you perfectly, and loves you wholly, *because* he knows you so well. He loves you with the whole force of an innocent heart. And I, my Heloise, am I not the happiest of mothers, that I can give to my son a partner for life, whose mother I shall then doubly be, and who will doubly insure me his filial love?"

Heloise lay in her arms, hiding her face with both hands. "Oh! my mother!" she murmured, but her emotion did not let her continue. The mother pressed her to her once more, and then left her alone with a heart agitated more than ever before, but full of tenderness and gratitude.

The journey to the death-bed of the princess had taken place during Felix's vacation, and had prevented his visit. Autumn, and with it the third recess, was approaching, and would bring him home once more. His mother and sister were preparing for his reception; the first, by considering in what way she should disclose to him her secret; and Heloise, by trying to conquer her uneasiness. But, instead of him, there came quite unexpectedly a letter, saying that his friends had been so urgent in their entreaties to have him take advantage of his leisure at this beautiful season, and join them in a journey to Switzerland, that he could not resist. The hope of heartfelt enjoyment which he took with him, would, he was sure, excuse him with his mother and sister. Next spring, he hoped to have the happiness of being with them all the longer.

His mother was dissatisfied, Heloise piqued. But his

letters, so full of enthusiasm, the wish, so often expressed in them, that his beloved ones might share his enjoyment, the love with which his happy heart seemed overflowing, all these soon reconciled both, and before long they were grateful to the friends who had occasioned him so much pleasure, and enhanced it by their companionship. The young men who, though not all possessed of genius, were full of romance, fantastically dressed and proudly elated by the invigorating feeling of their liberty, met with a thousand adventures, which one of them put in rhyme, another made sketches of, and Felix transmitted to his sister with every post. The dear child enjoyed these descriptions with her whole heart. "He is happy, mother," she said, "what more could I wish?"

The winter passed in pleasant anticipation. With the approach of spring, that strange, troubled feeling, stole into her heart again, and increased with every day. But when, one day sooner than she had expected, she saw Felix galloping into the court-yard, taller and stouter than before, but otherwise just the same merry, affectionate Felix, her heart, too, was suddenly itself again. With a cry of joy, she flew down stairs, threw herself into his arms, and summoned the whole household to witness her happiness. Felix could not take his eyes off his beautiful, blooming sister. "How lovely you have grown," he said, twenty times, and she blushed as she heard it, but felt no embarrassment. In the evening she said to her mother, "I can hardly believe that he is not my brother! My heart, at least, cannot be convinced of it. To a lover, so I always thought, at least, a modest girl should grant a kiss only with a blush; but when Felix kisses me, I assure you, dear mother, I feel just as if it were you."

"God bless you, my child," replied the mother, "and may that feeling always remain the same in you."

And it did remain so. Madame von Waldeck, touched by the innocence of the intercourse of her beloved children,

put off from day to day the revealing of her secret to Felix. The close relation in which she saw him, to a circle of thoughtless young men; the high ideas which he had of friendship and its obligations, one of the first of which he declared to be that of concealing nothing from one another, induced her at last to leave him still in ignorance of it, and to await the end of his academical career, when she could hope for the dissolution of some of these connections.

During four years, Felix attended several universities, and formed himself into a polished, excellent, and highly cultivated man. At each visit, he found his sister more charming, amiable, and sensible; and the intimate acquaintance with so superior a girl was doubtless the cause of his being rather indifferent towards the attractions of other females, and if he did enter into some trifling flirtations, his heart remained entirely untouched. Heloise, on the other hand, familiarized herself more and more with the idea of being his wife at some future time; and through her cherishing and fostering it for years, her future assumed a distinct shape before her soul, which neither outward incentive, nor enthusiastic fancy, could change in the least.

The tenderness, the respect, which he manifested towards her, confirmed the idea. She did not think of wishing for more; for every trace of passion was yet slumbering within her.

The fame of her beauty drew, by degrees, several young noblemen into the neighborhood, but not one of them could make the least impression on her by his attentions. Madame von Waldeck was heartily pleased with this indifference, but she now thought seriously of bringing the lovers closer together, and acquainting Felix with the secret, although their marriage could not be thought of during the lifetime of the old prince, whose death had been thought near for the last ten years. She therefore concluded to leave her manor, and

introduce Heloise into the world. She would choose for her residence any city where Felix might obtain a suitable diplomatic appointment. In expectation of such an appointment, he was now at the capital, and the old prince and his courtiers were not mean enough to consider the displeasure which his mother had drawn upon herself, before the merits of his late father and his own recommending qualities. He soon announced to his friends that he had been appointed secretary to the embassy which was about to be sent to a powerful monarch of northern Germany, expressed his impatience to see them again, and invited them with affectionate words to follow him. Madame von Waldeck, fortunately, had an early friend living in the city to which he was going, Madame von Pollwitz, the lady whom we saw receiving Heloise at the commencement of our tale. She wrote to her, and announced herself and her daughter; for she believed that under the pretext of a mere journey of pleasure, she might leave without *éclat* the dominions of her prince, who kept a watchful eye upon her continually. The attractions of the place, she thought, would present to her sufficient inducement for a longer stay.

The truth of the saying, "Man proposes, God disposes," has been experienced by every one in the occurrences of his daily life. Our poor Heloise was now to have it impressed on her heart in a most trying way. All was ready; all the trunks were packed. Heloise danced about among them, clapping her hands with joy. Madame von Waldeck stooped to put some trifle into one of them before locking it, uttered a cry, and fell back insensible. There was no physician in the neighborhood, and all present soon saw that here nothing could be done, as it was an apoplectic fit with which their beloved mistress had been seized. She recovered her senses after a few hours, but was unable to speak; and could only direct her eyes, with a look full of tenderness and

affection, towards the unhappy Heloise, who knelt by her bed, pale as death, and bathed in tears. She informed her by signs that she was now to go alone to Madame von Pollwitz, where Felix would meet her. When the name of the dear absent one was mentioned to her, she gave to understand that she wished to write to him, and with a trembling hand she wrote, in hardly legible characters, the following words:

"My Felix! Your dying mother sends you her blessing. Look to God in every thing. Heloise will tell you all. She will become your wife. This is my last will!"

The exertion had fatigued her. Soon after she again became unconscious, and awoke no more.

We say nothing of the bitter anguish of Heloise. Whoever has had the misfortune to lose the dearest friend on earth, can feel for her; and to those whom Providence has yet spared such an affliction, words cannot give an idea of it. In the village pastor she possessed a faithful friend, an able adviser. The only thing which might have given her some consolation, would have been Felix's presence; but this too was to be denied her. Before the minister's letter, which announced to him his irreparable loss, could have reached him, one from him informed Heloise that he was already on his way to England, where a commission from his prince, which required the most speedy execution, had sent him. He therefore begged her and his mother to give up their journey for the present, as his business would perhaps keep him away for several months. The whole burden of the affairs with which, after a death, the unfortunate bereaved family are overwhelmed, now fell upon Heloise. She was at first appalled by it; but the three months which passed before all these arrangements were completed, developed in her powers of soul and character which she had never before given herself credit for, and which those with whom business brought her together, had never known in her.

Her affairs, however, were much simplified by the fact that the whole property, even the capital which had been left to Madame von Waldeck at the death of her husband, fell exclusively to Felix. He had shortly before come of age. In a former will of his mother, she had bequeathed her jewels, her wardrobe, and a quantity of other personal property, to Heloise, and imposed upon Felix the duty of settling upon her a certain moderate annuity. In the same document, the minister, the kind friend of Heloise, had been nominated her guardian. This will had been drawn up before the death of the princess, and therefore contained nothing in reference to the prince royal, who was not then in the secret. The fact that no capital had been left to Heloise, was at first very surprising to Felix; but, thoughtless and noble-minded as he was, especially in money matters, he drew no other inference from it than that it was now doubly his duty to take care of his sister.

Six months had passed, and Felix had at length returned to the legation. But Heloise had now accustomed herself to solitude. She had taken the place of the departed one, had become the benefactress of the poor, the patroness of the schools. Resolved as she was to pass at least the mourning year at Waldeck, she was only induced by Felix's more and more urgent entreaties, to leave it already after nine months. Madame von Pollwitz had, on hearing of her friend's death, and repeatedly afterwards, placed her house at Heloise's disposal. The reader has seen, in the beginning of the book, that Felix was yet in ignorance of the secret. A very natural embarrassment restrained Heloise. If he had come for her himself, she might have found the right moment, but the ambassador could not spare him again after so long an absence. The accidental circumstance that Felix never asked, in his letters, whether his mother had not left any documents for him, was the excuse which she made to herself

for keeping the last lines of the beloved hand from him so long. With an anxious and agitated heart she set out on her journey. Lisette, who had been long in her and her mother's service, accompanied her. We have seen her arrive, and welcome Felix, and left her in a quiet, peaceful slumber.

CHAPTER III.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

Always accustomed to a careful employment of her time, Heloise awoke early, when the whole household was still asleep. Only Lisette was moving about in the adjoining room, occupied with arranging it and putting her mistress's wardrobe in order. Our heroine rose, and, after dressing, was just about to assist her maid in her occupation, when a slight knock at her door was heard, and Felix entered the room.

"My dear Felix! so early!" she cried, in a tone of joyful surprise; but added, with much concern, when she noticed, on looking at him more closely, the pallor of his face and his disturbed mien: "But, dearest brother, how you look! What has happened?"

"Nothing at all," he replied, smiling; "I only came home towards morning, and as I wanted to speak to you before you would perhaps have to breakfast with Madame von Pollwitz, I did not lie down at all."

"Have you only just now returned from that party?"

"Oh, no; I left it some hours ago; but before I had changed my dress, the time drew near when I could see you; and besides that, I had a good many things on my mind which would not have let me sleep much at any rate."

"What is it that troubles you, brother?" asked Heloise, with affectionate concern.

"Leave us alone, Lisette," he said to the maid. She went. Heloise grew more and more uneasy. "My dear

child," continued Felix, "don't be frightened. Is it not natural that, after so long a separation, we should have much to say to each other, which is not fit for a servant's ears?"

"You are right," replied Heloise, in a serious tone. "Sit down here by me. We have indeed much to tell each other." Her heart beat audibly at these words, and a voice whispered to her, "The moment has now come; he must now learn that I am not his sister, but his bride!"*

Felix sat by her side, lost in thought. He had taken her hand, and was silently playing with its little fingers; but suddenly he raised it to his lips and covered it with kisses, at the same time expressing his admiration of the pretty little white hand. Heloise withdrew it with some displeasure; for, occupied as she had been during the pause, with the last sacred moments of their departed friend, with a question of which she was in momentary expectation, the gallantry of her beloved rather hurt than flattered her. He again relapsed into profound silence.

"Felix," she said at length, summoning all her courage, "Do our thoughts perhaps meet at this moment?"

"Hardly," he answered, and she continued:

"Have you no questions to ask me?"

"Questions enough, but my heart is now so full, that I must unburden it before I admit any thing more into it. Dearest sister, I have something to confide to you!"

"Something to confide?" she asked, in surprise. "You too?"

"I too? my dear Heloise, have you, perhaps, a similar secret on your mind?"

"A similar one? How can I know of what nature yours is?" she replied, forcing a smile. "It is true I have a great

* The terms, *bride* and *bridegroom*, in Germany, are applied to young people before marriage, as soon as they are betrothed.

deal to tell you, and how could it be otherwise, when I have experienced the most important moment of my life since I last saw you."

"My dear sister," said Felix, "do not doubt that it is of equal importance to me. But our beloved mother will forgive me, if, before I call upon you for a relation, every word of which is sacred and dear to me, as was every thing which you wrote to me with regard to her death—if, I say, before listening to this relation, I deliver my heart of a secret which has now weighed me down for several weeks past, because I have not yet communicated it to you, my own Heloise; to you, who have the first right to my confidence."

Heloise was silent, and regarding him with anxious and eager attention, she said to herself, "Is it possible! can he know it already!"

"Dearest Heloise," continued Felix, drawing nearer and putting his arm around her, "it seemed as if I hurt your feelings yesterday, by the words, 'I am happier than ever; I cannot help it.' To-day I will add, 'and often I could call myself more unhappy than I ever feared to be.' You cannot misunderstand me when you have heard my confession—*I love!*"

At these words a feeling shot through Heloise, which no pen can describe. An ice-cold hand seemed suddenly to be laid on her burning heart; her breath stopped, and her eyes grew dim. Without knowing what she did, she tore herself with violence from the arms of Felix, who, solely occupied with what he was going to say, did not notice the change in her color and mien, and went on.

"I love, with all the passion and all the fervor of which my heart is capable, the most charming, fascinating creature under the sun; and what is more, I am so fortunate as to know that my love is returned with equal tenderness. The unspeakable bliss of this assurance often causes me to overlook all

the obstacles which stand in the way of our union." He paused.

"Tell me all," said Heloise, in so low a tone that he could not remark the trembling of her voice.

"But I *must* not overlook them, if I would remove them; and to do that is my firm resolution, for there is no happiness for me but in the possession of my sweet, charming Emma."

"Emma is her name?"

"Emma von Willingen. Oh, my dear Heloise! what a lovely, enchanting creature! You will—you must be friends. She has long known you and loved you. You have many a time been the subject of our conversation. She wanted to know every thing about you, even the color of your eyes. The most irresistible, most transporting little creature under the sun!"

"Have you known her long?"

"It is just eight weeks to-day since I saw her for the first time. She came from church, before which I was standing with several friends and acquaintances. A crowd of poor people of every description surrounded the church door. She stopped, compassionately, spoke a kind word to each one, divided the contents of her purse among them, and, at last, when she had nothing left, she gave the delicate little purse itself to an old man who just came up. I heard her say with her silvery voice, "Sell it, good father; I worked it myself." But hardly had a pair of fleet horses, which were awaiting the divine girl, conveyed her away, before I sprang forward and gave the old man a large sum for the purse. I took it away with me, and intended to use it for charitable purposes; but when I met Emma again, and she grew dearer and dearer to me, I feared that use would wear out the little love-token, and since then I have worn it next my heart."

"And how did you see her again?"

"As the brilliant belle of a ball, where all paid homage to her, where her charms outshone all. I had only to see her dance—the little, zephyr-like sylph—to be completely enchanted! On this occasion, too, I found reason to hope that I was not indifferent to her, and soon after acquired the blissful certainty that she loved me."

"So soon?"

"Dear sister, love cares not for watch or almanac; he makes his own laws for time and hours. One look, directed by him, and understood by his disciple, reveals more than a whole eternity could teach. Emma, affectionate and tender as she is, often did her best to keep up this certainty within me; but she is so much the object of admiration and worship, that my heart is continually tortured by the sharpest pangs of jealousy. What did I not suffer yesterday! what did she not make of me! and how well she understands to touch the tenderest spot in my heart!"

"Did you see her yesterday?"

"It was on her account that I had to go to the chamberlain's *soirée*; for no other reason would I have left you so soon after our meeting, dearest sister. She alone could supplant you. She knew that I was aware of her going there; she herself had let me know her intention of so doing. I might have given up the pleasure of seeing her, on your account, but to brave her anger—you see," he added, smiling, "your proud, tyrannical Felix, who so often abused your patience, you little gentle dove, is transformed into a poor, humble slave. Her smile makes me the happiest of men, her displeasure disconcerts me entirely; and yesterday it gave me a sleepless night."

"You came, and still she was displeased?"

"I deserved censure," he replied, slightly embarrassed, and forcing a smile. "She had expected me three hours before I came. She had not a single look for me. She

beamed with beauty and loveliness, but she seemed to be beautiful and lovely only for the circle of fops and impudent coxcombs which surrounded her. Sister! I suffered terribly! At last I succeeded in reaching her side, and speaking to her unnoticed by the others. I reproached her violently; she gave me the bitterest words in return. She loves me, and love is suspicious, and watches over his rights. In short, it was I alone who was in fault, and I do believe that in the end I begged her pardon. She has the sweetest, most charming way of forgiving; but, nevertheless, I still felt discontented. Sister, do not be unjust; Emma is good and affectionate, but she is a woman—"

"You are exceedingly civil, brother. I am certainly very much obliged to you for that remark."

"Do not take offence at it, dear Heloise. You are the personification of gentleness and kindness; but you have never loved, and cannot—or what—is it not so?" he added, starting, as he saw her delicate face, which, during the conversation, through the violent exertion of repressing all her painfully excited feelings into her bosom, had grown paler and paler, suddenly suffused with a dark crimson—"can it be otherwise? Good heavens!" he continued, more and more disturbed; "you said a short time ago, you too—the secret—"

"It is no matter—what are you thinking of? Really," she added, not without bitterness, "it was no love story that I had to tell you. Never mind that now; my secret is not so very important, and we can find a more suitable time to speak of it. Tell me all, now. You mentioned before that you did not see her often?"

"To my sorrow, not often enough. She lives with her grandfather, an old man, to whom every visit is a bore, except that of two superannuated comrades of his, who come regularly for a game of whist, at which the grandmother makes the fourth. All my attempts to gain admission to the house

have been fruitless. I can only see the sweet girl at parties, at the theatre, or at concerts and other similar occasions. *Alone* I can only see her when I escort her home in the evening, when, to be sure, we take many a circuitous route, and employ our time well. The pedantic order in the house of the colonel, and the silly curiosity of the old lady, have hitherto made it impossible for Emma to let me visit her secretly. Out of the house she can do just what she likes, and visit whomever she pleases; but at home she can do nothing that infringes upon the domestic rules of the old people, who like quiet above every thing else."

"Does she go to parties and public places of amusement all alone?"

"She goes under the protection, sometimes of one, sometimes of another, friend; but, unfortunately, she is not intimate enough with any one of them to make use of her house to see me alone sometimes. I have often urged Emma to bring this about, but she has no confidante among her friends. The younger ones are all envious, and the older ones have daughters or nieces who are so. Emma herself was so exceedingly kind as to propose to me, that we might meet in one of the public gardens at a time when it is not frequented; but I trembled for her reputation. Fearing that we might be seen there, I had the forbearance to refuse. Our only hope now rests upon you, my good little sister. You will visit her—she you—you will be friends—nothing is more natural; and I can see her here every day. How have I therefore longed for your arrival, dearest Heloise! How have I therefore urged you to hasten your journey!"

"Was it for this?" thought Heloise. Her heart was crushed, her voice nearly failed her, but still she summoned all the strength which her injured maidenly pride lent her, to ask in an indifferent tone: "But why, Felix, do you not act in this affair as an honorable man ought to act? Of what

use is all this secrecy? What prevents you from going directly to Emma's grandparents and asking her hand of them, as you are certain of her love? What could induce them to give you a refusal?"

"Ah! dearest sister!" rejoined Felix, "that is just what I had yet to tell you. Emma is *engaged!*"

These words called up a strange mixture of feelings in Heloise's breast. "Engaged?" she repeated.

"She has been, since her fourteenth year, betrothed to her cousin; a family compromise to settle an interminable lawsuit. The lovely creature is to be sacrificed to the peace, the domestic comfort, of the old people. The cousin is sixteen years her senior; she knows him only from her childish recollections, for he has spent the seven years that have passed since her grandparents coupled her to him, in travelling."

"If such is the state of things," said Heloise, with constraint, "no real love can be expected on his side, and he could, perhaps, if he was informed of Emma's sentiments, be induced to draw back."

"That is my chief ground for hope. There is a sort of condition in the contract, about not leaving Emma's feelings unconsulted; but nothing can be done before the cousin's return. The grandparents are tough, obstinate, and inaccessible. I would doubtless expose myself to a refusal. I must speak to and negotiate with him himself. I am ready for any pecuniary sacrifice. For the present, I suppose I must be satisfied with seeing Emma secretly."

"Will he come soon?" asked Heloise timidly.

"Nothing has been heard about him for a long time. If I only knew where he is at present! He may come to-morrow, and may stay away another year. He writes to the colonel from time to time, but very seldom."

"So he has heard so little of his bride in those seven years?"

"He corresponds with a lady here, who perhaps has not left him entirely uninformed; it is the Baroness Starnberg, whose acquaintance you made last night. They are said to have been in love with each other at one time, and still keep up a sort of tender connection which they call friendship. This pure friendship, however, seems not to be pure enough to be free from jealousy, for it is very evident that the baroness dislikes Emma because she is to be her successor. That will account to you for the singular manner which she assumed towards me last night, for she knew that Emma had expressly requested me to come to the party."

"You are perhaps unjust, Felix," remarked Heloise: "if she is jealous of Emma on her friend's account, would she not rather seek to promote her union with another?"

"That is very true," replied the young man, musingly; "still I am too certain that she cannot bear Emma. I have a thousand proofs of that, and I dislike her heartily for it. But the clock is striking nine; Madame von Pollwitz will soon send for you to breakfast. I shall see you again at dinner—she has invited me. But tell me, first, when will you call on my Emma?"

"I did not intend to go out so soon, dear brother. However—if perhaps—if you wish it—" she was terribly confused, and hardly knew what she said.

"If I wish it?" he cried, in great astonishment, "after I have expressed to you the hope of seeing her daily in your room?"

"Very well," she replied, hurriedly, "to-morrow—to-morrow morning! only not to-day—not to-day!"

"My dear sister," said Felix, much surprised, "I hardly know you—you are not yourself any more—"

"Brother," said Heloise, quickly recovering herself, "should I not be a little offended, that you kept your love so long a secret from me, who have been your confidante from our childhood?"

"You are not reasonable, Heloise. Remember that I expected daily to see you—"

"Well, well," interrupted Heloise, with a forced smile, "I am not angry any more; but you had better go now—Madame von Pollwitz must be waiting for me."

"Good bye, then," he said, embracing her, with the intention of kissing her cheek, as was his wont; but she prevented it by a quick movement, and accompanied him to the door with hasty steps.

"What strange behavior!" said Felix, wonderingly, to himself, as he left the room. "She was evidently provoked that I had made my choice without her advice and approval. This surprises me in Heloise, who is always so disinterested and affectionate! Oh, despotism of woman's caprices! In every way dost thou torment me! But courage! It will not last long with her. And if I ask myself—would such a disclosure on her part have been acceptable to me eight weeks ago? And even now?"

He suddenly remembered Heloise's secret, and although he rejected the idea entirely, as she had assured him that it was nothing of that kind, yet he could not help feeling somewhat troubled at the mere possibility of not always occupying the first place in the heart of this exemplary girl. He resolved to question her on this point, when next they were alone, and soon his mind was again occupied solely with his Emma.

Heloise locked the door behind her cousin, bolted it, mechanically, without knowing what she did, and then crossed the room in silence. But her strength was exhausted; her limbs failed her. She sank down before the sofa, and, burying her face in the cushions, gave way to a flood of tears. "Oh! my mother, my mother!" she cried, at last, in a tone of anguish, and so loud that she started at the sound of her own voice. "Is it possible?" she added, in a

lower tone, with trembling lips — "What have I heard? Has my whole life been a dream? What is now to become of me? Am I all alone in the world? Is there no one that loves me in all the wide, wide world? Oh, my mother, my mother! Why did you leave me?" She again concealed her face. One painful feeling chased the other in her mind injured affection, wounded pride, jealousy, the feeling of her loneliness, all these united to make her, for a few moments, one of the most miserable beings in the world. Suddenly she sprang up: "And into what worthless hands has his heart fallen! What a girl is this Emma! She distributes alms in the face of a crowd of young men, whose eyes are fixed upon her! And what affectation, that about the purse! Could she not tell the old man to come to her house, where it was much more proper to give, at any rate? How ridiculous to tell him she had made it herself! Any one must be entirely blind, not to perceive that she only said these words for Felix. What modest girl will give her lover reason to hope at their second meeting? And carry a love intrigue to such an extent in eight short weeks, without the knowledge of her parents! In the street! And a bride! And what behavior was that last night? What sort of love is that, which would suppress the most natural, the holiest feelings? This Emma!" With these words she had been pacing up and down the room. At once her eye fell on the glass, and she started, frightened at herself, when she beheld her cheeks, burning with anger, and her eyes, from which flashed a strange passion. A still brighter glow covered her face, but now it was the glow of shame; her eyes fell, and slowly folding her hands, she stood awhile perfectly still. "Good God!" she said at last, deeply dejected; "what an unworthy sensation fills my heart and mind! How mean, how miserable, does ignoble, humiliating jealousy make me! Yes, do not conceal the name, give yourself up entirely to the shame of having

given it the power thus to debase you. In what an unkind, unwomanly light have I viewed Emma's most innocent actions! Is giving alms such a virtuous act, that she should conceal it? She loves him—and should she be prudish and false, and hide it from him? Oh Emma! Felix! and you, my mother, forgive me! Emma, should I hate you because Felix loves you? Unnatural love! No, no—it was only for a moment that I could sink so low. Oh! be happy! I, I myself will make you happy,—here you shall meet, and love each other, here you shall be happy—I will look on with these eyes,—will bless you, and—die!"

Tears once more relieved her aching breast, but they flowed more gently, and her heart beat less violently.

CHAPTER IV.

A MAIDEN'S HEART.

Heloise started on hearing a slight tap at her door, and Lisette's voice requesting admittance. She dried her eyes, tried to compose herself, and opened the door. Her maid brought word that Madame von Pollwitz was expecting her to breakfast. She would have liked to assign indisposition or fatigue as an excuse for remaining alone a few hours longer, but the inward honesty of her character had ever taught her to shun all empty pretexts, and her mother confirmed her in this course, all the more from having been convinced, by her early acquaintance with the intricate web of deceit surrounding a small court, of the demoralizing influence which it inevitably exerts. Our heroine, therefore, sought to calm herself, and repaired, though with a somewhat disturbed expression of countenance, to the breakfast room. She was silent, when her hostess, after welcoming her with kindness and politeness, remarked her agitation, and attributed it, of her own accord, to the fatigue of the journey and the first meeting of a brother and sister after so sad a bereavement. But her tears started anew, as she suddenly remembered how far these natural and filial feelings had been crowded into the background of her soul, and how selfish were the sensations that had produced an effect which even a woman so indifferent and moderate as her companion seemed to be, thought natural, and indeed unavoidable, as arising from filial

grief. Her hostess was rather embarrassed at this burst of sorrow, and we do not know but what she might have been inclined to repent having offered the young orphan a home, had she not fortunately recollected that the gayeties and amusements of the capital must necessarily have the most beneficial effect on her low spirits; she therefore did not delay, while she seemed to take no notice of her young friend's emotion, to tell her about all the pleasant and interesting acquaintances which she would make. She enumerated a great many noble names and titles, particularized those families where there were grown-up sons and daughters, and named, besides, sundry marriageable men; the young gentlemen were almost all honored with some adjective—such as excellent, interesting, charming—and particular mention was made of those who were rich, or good dancers.

Then she passed on to the theatre, and other opportunities for the enjoyment of the fine arts, which were in prospect, and although, when she began to criticise, the individual members of the stage and other disciples of Apollo did not fare as well as they might, yet she did not doubt but what all this would please Heloise in the highest degree, and mentioned several strangers from the country who had been enchanted with it.

Heloise listened in silence. While her hostess was talking, the picture of her nearest future spread itself out before her mind's eye. Every word of the speaker added a new stroke to it, until at length it stood before her in terrible distinctness. She saw herself in the midst of a crowd of cold, strange faces; not a single heart which beat for her, not a single hand which was tendered her, no eye that wept with her; vague figures hovered around her; she tried to grasp them, to cling to them, in the despairing feeling of her loneliness, but like shadows they escaped from her hands, and moved past her in cold silence. Alas! one well-known beloved friend she recognized among the crowd, but he saw her not; without no-

ticing her, without bestowing upon her one loving look that might console her, he was soon lost among the mass of strangers.

Thus she sat, motionless, lost in the most painful thoughts, her tearful eye fixed on the ground, and hardly heard, at last, what her hostess was saying, when a servant entered and interrupted the latter. He informed Heloise that the coachman who had brought her here desired to see her, and was waiting for her in her room. It seemed, he added, suppressing a laugh, as if the poor man was not very much pleased here; he had made many complaints, and had spoken of going back again to-day.

Heloise started up. Like lightning the thought flashed across her mind, that she might return with him to her home. To-day! The idea seized her with such force, that a word in allusion to it involuntarily escaped her. Without taking any notice of the wondering mien of Madame von Pollwitz, she flew out of the door and to her room, where she found the honest countryman, whom she had known from her childhood, waiting for her. He declared to her, very frankly, that he could not stand it here any longer, every one made fun of him, and played tricks on him; however, he could bear that, and laugh at it too; but then he had been cheated in all sorts of ways, and if he did not get away from here soon, they would strip him entirely. He then enumerated, with the greatest precision, what he had had for supper and breakfast at the inn where he had stopped, and could not say enough about the enormous bill which had been made him there; while, at the same time, he swore lustily at townsmen, rogues, and innkeepers, which words he appeared to regard as synonymous.

While he was speaking, Heloise wavered. "Away from here!" said the voice of her injured maidenly pride. "Away from here—to day—now—so that his eyes may never behold

you more! What does he care whether he sees you or not? And yet he will certainly miss you—he will wonder, will perhaps be concerned at your sudden disappearance—perhaps sad, if he never hears a word about you again! Yes—and then the old, accustomed affection, that a stranger alienated from you, will again awake in his heart, and far away, vanished, dead, you will be nearer to him than in his most immediate vicinity—but still—who knows—"

We dare not say whether it was the secret fear of being, in such a case, entirely forgotten by him, and deprived of all hope, which intruded itself almost involuntarily upon her mind, or the feeling of the impropriety of the step which she was about to take, which at last put a stop to the impetuous current of her thoughts. Enough, she began to perceive that so precipitate a departure would be as much an insult to her kind hostess, as she would make herself ridiculous by it. At length, therefore, she replied to the waiting peasant, who remarked the agitation in her face with pitying wonder, consoled him with kind words, reminded him that it was she who paid all his expenses, and bade him not mind them. She tried to persuade him to stay yet a few days—she thought he owed this to his tired horses, each one of which she inquired after; so that the good man, who loved his horses like his children, was highly pleased. He willingly agreed to remain longer, and it almost seemed as if his saying that he was going back that day, had only been a pretext for seeing his "dear young lady," and telling her his trouble. Heloise then advised him to get some one to show him about in the city, told him of all the sights that she thought would interest him, and when he declared that he could not remember so many names, she wrote them all down on a piece of paper for him, without finding any thing in the least extraordinary in this condescension. By endeavoring to comfort the good old man, she had cheered *herself*, and when at last he took his leave, she said, half

sadly, half in joke: "Who knows, my good Henry, but what I may go back with you myself, if you stay a little longer." She was, however, rather disconcerted when he said, very seriously, after looking at her for a few moments: "I believe that would be the very best thing you could do, Miss. What is going to become of the school at home, that Miss thought so much of? Every thing will go backward in Waldeck—and, to be frank, you don't look at all as if you would flourish here, my dear young lady!" "Well, well," she answered, forcing a smile, "be sure to come and see me every morning; we can make our arrangements by and by."

The coachman went. Fortunately there was enough time before dinner, when she was to meet Felix again, for her to collect herself, and think over the events of the morning. She tried to recall word for word her conversation with Felix, and in the end she hardly knew whether the pain at the disclosure he had made, or the shame at her own behavior, by which she had so disgracefully exposed herself and her feelings, occupied the largest place in her mind. She commenced reproaching herself bitterly—"What must he think of me?" she said; "how unkind—how unsisterly must I have appeared to him! And how—when at length he learns that I am not his sister—for I cannot keep it from him for ever—will he not then see through my heart? Will he not recall every word, every mien, and assign the most humiliating causes to all of them? And will he not be right?

"Oh! until every trace of them has passed from his memory, it shall remain an inviolable secret to him. Do your best, poor heart, to banish the recollection of them from his mind, and call together the entire force of your pride!"

She also thought of the strange haste with which she had left her hostess, and, blaming herself for it, she resolved to endeavor to make up for it by the greatest kindness and attention; and when, soon after, she joined her at dinner,

her natural childlike amiability soon enabled her to succeed in this. Felix, too, was received by her with composure, and pleasant words, and several times she called him, intentionally, "dear brother," as if she wished to justify her feelings for him, before him and herself. She availed herself, with some haste, of an opportunity to draw him to the window, where she asked him, rather constrainedly, though without visible embarrassment:

"Was there perhaps something in my conduct this morning that surprised you, my good Felix?"

"Yes, indeed!" he answered frankly.

"Do not think any thing of it, dear brother," she rejoined. "To tell you the truth, I, who have of late had only the most serious and the saddest thoughts, and believed your mind to be in the same state, was hardly prepared for such a confession, which deprived me in one moment of the sole participator of my grief, the only person who sympathized with me. You need not defend yourself, dear Felix," she added, as he tried to interrupt her, "I see now, that I was unjust; for," she continued, her voice faltering, "love is an involuntary feeling, and we cannot command it when to come and when to go."

"Did I not know, my own Heloise," he exclaimed, with emotion, "that you are goodness itself, and that you only need a moment to return to the right course?"

With these words he was about to embrace her, but she quickly extricated herself from his encircling arms, and, not to give him time for surprise, she said, thoughtlessly:

"That will do! I will go and call on your Emma soon now."

"Will you, dearest child? and when? to-morrow?"

"Yes, yes," she replied, while her lovely face grew crimson: and, as if to take revenge on her heart, she added:

"And then I will aid you in every thing. You can see

her in my room as often and as long as you wish, until all obstacles are removed, and you—"

Here Felix, overjoyed, quickly caught her in his arms, and before the struggling girl could prevent it, he pressed his lips to hers. She freed herself, rather displeased, and said, with a forced laugh, "Really, you have turned lover so completely, that you seem to forget that you are something besides."

Before he could answer her, Madame von Pollwitz approached them. They went to dinner, and spoke of commonplace things. The meal passed quite pleasantly. Felix had a good deal to say about England, where, as we have seen, he had lately been, and Heloise's mind was diverted. After dinner, Felix had to return to his business. Madame von Pollwitz proposed that Heloise should go with her to see her daughter, but before they could put this plan into execution, two of her friends, elderly ladies, called, and staid the whole evening. The whist table was produced, and Heloise, who at least knew the cards, was obliged, from politeness, to make the fourth, and bore the frequent corrections of her companions with inexhaustible patience.

We do not, however, intend to weary our kind readers by following Heloise, step by step, as we have until now, through a life to which *the heart* only gave importance. So far, details were necessary, and perhaps some prolixity excusable, because the events which we have related, in themselves quite unimportant, composed the foundation of the whole structure of sorrows, misunderstandings, and griefs, into which her life, for some time to come, was to form itself. We must, however, crave the indulgence of our readers for one more morning, during which she made two visits; of which the one, to Emma, was exceedingly interesting to her, as it brought her in contact with a person who had had the most important influence on her destiny—and the other gave her the first agreeable impression which she had enjoyed since she arrived at her

new abode, by making her better acquainted with the young Baroness Starnberg.

Madame von Pollwitz intended to accompany her to the latter place, but was kept at home by a cold, and therefore requested her to go alone—her servant should show her the way. Heloise concluded to go, though rather reluctantly; for although the lady had, on the whole, pleased her very well, yet the extreme ease of her manner, the superiority in the tone of her conversation—all this had awed the young girl a little.

From the house of the baroness she was to proceed directly—so she had agreed with Felix—to that of Emma, which was very near, and which he had described to her. With a beating heart she made her preparations for this expedition. Her mourning, which she had not yet left off, saved her the trouble of an elaborate toilet; still she remained longer than usual before the glass, and, to her shame, caught herself thinking that she should like Emma to see her rival to the best advantage, when the latter could not possibly suspect that she, who introduced herself to her as her friend's sister, was not at heart what she represented herself to be.

CHAPTER V.

TWO VISITS.

A MAID opened the door when our heroine arrived at Isabella's, and it seemed as if she had been interrupted in some important business, for when Heloise requested her to announce her, she told her to go through all the rooms—she would find Madame in the last one. Heloise, therefore, not quite free from timidity, passed through a row of elegant apartments, until she stood before a door which was ajar, and behind which she heard the tender voices of children. Upon her knocking gently, Isabella herself came to the door. She hardly recognized in her the fashionable lady of the other evening. In a simple, though tasteful loose-dress, with a plain morning cap, she was not half as beautiful, as youthful; and yet there was a nameless charm in her countenance—a look full of soul, which won the heart much quicker than all the brilliancy which paint, dress, and candle-light could bestow. She welcomed Heloise with the most fascinating smile, and said, jestingly:

"Ah! you penetrate even into my holy of holies! But nature consecrated your feet at your birth, and one needs to have seen you but once, to know that you are a *born* priestess, not only of the beautiful, but also of the good."

"I would think," replied Heloise, with a smile, "that I ought to beg pardon for my boldness, did not the result show me that I have not done wrong; for a crime would not be rewarded by so charming a sight as that of a mother in the midst of her children."

With these words she directed an affectionate glance towards the three little girls, who, all dressed alike in pink gingham, and seated in a circle on low footstools, were occupied with their work, and eyed her with modest curiosity.

"A very wrong conclusion, my dear," said Isabella, at the same time divesting her guest of hat and cloak, "and more sophism than I would have expected from a country girl of nineteen. But we will speak of that another time. For the present you will sit with me a while; and you, dear little ones, welcome this pretty aunt, and then take your work and finish it in the next room."

"Am I to break this lovely circle, my dear baroness?" said Heloise in a tone of regret; "Pray let me enjoy the presence of these dear children."

"May not their mother claim some privilege?" inquired Isabella. "I hope to have you here often—and then you can see as much as you want of these little chatterboxes; but to-day you belong to me."

The two elder of the little girls, of which the one seemed not much over six, and the other five years old, took their knitting and went to the adjoining bedroom. The smallest, a beautiful child of about three, who also had a task to perform—that of pulling a fine rag into shreds, for lint—followed her sisters reluctantly, and not without having begged a kiss from her mother and granted one to Heloise. Soon after, our friends heard their prattle and laughter through the half-open door. True politeness—and such it was that Isabella possessed—has always something of cordiality in it. Real politeness desires to please, to awaken agreeable sensations, and, by flattering attention, to put the individual towards whom it is practised, in a pleasant mood; and this it cannot accomplish without appearing to feel some affection, some interest. Isabella, as we have already said, was an adept in this rare art, and had often practised it to her advantage;

but the confidence with which Heloise, from the first moment of their acquaintance, had inspired her, by the innocent expression of her large eyes as well as by her childlike, modest mien—which, in connection with the natural dignity that characterized all her motions, was particularly pleasing—pity for her lonely situation, and admiration of her beauty, all these caused her not only to practise her art to-day without bestowing one thought on the effect, but to mingle with it a sincerity which most people at least, wrongly think incompatible with refinement. Our young friend found herself, before she knew it, drawn into a familiar conversation with her, felt herself induced to speak of the happy days of her childhood, and did not repress the tears which memory called up, in presence of her friend. Isabella listened to her with deep emotion and sympathy, and said:

"I envy you these precious recollections—you have in them a treasure for your whole life. Whoever has once been very happy, and that long enough to have become conscious of it, has a powerful consolation when sorrow and misfortune assail him; and there is no stronger shield against the despair which we feel at the thought that we shall never be happy again—that we have lost the faculty of being so, than the consciousness of having been so at least once in our life, and of not having borne the cares and burdens of our existence entirely in vain."

"Surely," said Heloise, "we do not bear them in vain."

"My dear friend," interrupted Isabella, "pray leave paradise out of the game! I find nothing more arrogant than that we mortals count upon being *rewarded* in the other world. For what? Perhaps for the sacrifices which we were *forced* to make here below? Forced by circumstances, by our weakness, our folly? Confess, yourself, how seldom we renounce what pleases us, of our own accord; how few sacrifices we make unless we are obliged to do so. As regards the

recompense for these involuntary sacrifices, *that* we must endeavor to attain in this world—if we wish a recompense for them. Do these words offend your piety? Well, it is just *my* piety that cannot brook the idea that God owes us any thing."

"I suppose," said Heloise, "that we might make our views accord, but it would lead us too far. You speak the language of one that is happy—"

Isabella interrupted her, and said hastily, and not without sadness, "Do you really think me so happy?"

"I should think," replied Heloise, in a tone of warm interest, "that the mother of such lovely children could, at least, not be *unhappy*."

"You are right," answered Isabella, seriously; "I am a happy mother, and once, too, I was happy as a wife, as a human being. But it was only a flash of lightning, and those, you know, make the black night blacker yet. But the birth of my eldest child was the dawn which drives night away. Since then it has been day; and if, sometimes, dark clouds gather in the sky, yet they do not altogether hide the sun, which, beaming from my sweet children's eyes, warms my heart."

Isabella brushed away a tear as she spoke these words. Her eyes met those of Heloise, which were fixed on her with an expression of deep and warm affection. They sat hand in hand, and in silence, for some time. Isabella was the first to compose herself, and asked, turning the subject:

"Have you seen your brother already, to-day?"

"He was with me this morning."

"Waldeck spoke of you to me with enthusiasm. You are a brother and sister as are rarely met with. He loves and admires you, and your affection for him, is, I am convinced, no less tender, and much more disinterested. It is a pity that this fond tie is in danger of being broken."

"What danger do you mean?" inquired Heloise, with a beating heart.

"Do you really not know? And ought I to anticipate his confidence?"

"I think I know what you refer to. But must love necessarily destroy the most natural sensations of the heart?"

"If a noble love endangers them—as is doubtless the case, because love is a feeling so despotic that it lays claim to the whole, undivided heart—how much more must the affection for a worthless object, who finds in this supreme power an ignoble triumph, be injurious to them? Yes, my good girl, your brother has fallen into the snares of a little coquette, from which, I fear, you have come too late to extricate him. The only means of opening his eyes will be to let her quietly become his wife."

"It would be a cruel remedy," said Heloise; "but, as I hear, Emma is already engaged to another."

"I hardly think that match will ever be made," replied Isabella, while a faint color rose in her cheeks; "this other is sharp-sighted, and not as inexperienced as your brother. He will soon see how matters stand. And yet—who knows?" she continued, growing unconsciously more and more animated, "in this point all men are alike! One is really in danger of losing every trace of respect for them, when one has daily to witness how the most sensible, however correctly they may measure woman's worth in general, when individual merit is to be estimated, follow only the judgment which egotism, vanity, or sensuality forms in them. A girl with only a tolerable degree of shrewdness can present herself in whatever light she pleases, to the wisest of men, if she but call these allies to her aid; and this Emma knows the men well, and is an adept in all the little arts by which they are to be enchained."

Although there was something in Isabella's words which flattered Heloise, yet the zeal and severity with which they were spoken made her a little suspicious, and she remembered that Felix had called the baroness one of Emma's enemies, and what he had said of her connection with the bridegroom of the latter; she therefore asked, rather doubtfully:

"But do you know Emma so well? Is she really so spoilt?"

"She is not bad, but she is selfish, passionate, very wrongly educated, and vain to an infinite degree. I know her perfectly well. Particular circumstances directed my attention to her long ago. I watched her closely. But one needs no remarkable degree of penetration to see through her. For she has not that universal coquetry, that would conquer both sexes and all ages; this requires a certain degree of calculation, of self-control, for which Emma is not quite cold enough: she aims her darts only at the men, and therefore women easily penetrate her. But only at young men; the older ones she finds tiresome. To be the belle at all parties, to hear a serenade under her window every other evening, to occasion a few duels by capriciously refusing to dance with one or another—this is her ambition; I doubt whether her thoughts rise any higher. In short, she is a *common* coquette."

"Oh! what do you tell me!" cried Heloise, with a deep sigh—"my brother at the feet of so unworthy an object! What incomprehensible blindness! Oh! you know not with what cares you load my heart!"

"It would have been cruel in me to have told you this, had I not known that you must discover it sooner or later. You have been educated in the country; nevertheless, you will soon read her character, for that is an art which we women are *born* to practise."

"But she must have *some* qualities that can attract men

of noble mind. I know Felix—I have known him from his childhood; he is free from all baseness, all impurity.—Ah! do not smile! You pain me!"

"My dear child!" replied Isabella, "your brother may be as pure, as excellent as he can be: he is a man—that explains much; then he is an enthusiast—that explains still more. He probably saw her first in some touching situation; perhaps in church, where she has to go every Sunday, in obedience to her grandparents' command—for they are very orthodox, particularly the old lady. He saw her raising her large black eyes to heaven. We others look down, when we follow, in church, the prayer of the minister; but she—she has a truly Catholic devotion—though she was educated as a Calvinist—and can act the nun to perfection."

"Is she not very beautiful?" asked Heloise, timidly.

"Not exactly. She has one of those faces which superficial judges call interesting, but which are, in reality, only *piquant*, striking. Eyes full of fire and life, but without soul; a little nose, saucy and pretty, but not noble; full and swelling lips, such as can be found on no antique, and which seem to belong to a Dutch beauty, but are continually parted in a smile, showing teeth of a whiteness so dazzling as to be almost painful; delicate and moveable features, but without regularity; a slender waist, which, however, shows plainly that it owes its remarkably small size in part to the corset and the contrast of stiff skirts: in short, more stylish-looking than handsome."

"You are an excellent painter," replied Heloise, who, hardly herself aware of it, rejoiced in secret that Emma was not more beautiful. "Doubtless," she added, "she is so amiable, that any thing that is wanting to her beauty is not missed."

"That is a matter of taste. She has the most ordinary intellect—but a kind of shrewdness which supplies many a

deficiency. Instead of a cultivated mind she possesses a few talents, instead of wit, vivacity and assurance, and instead of information, true womanly ignorance. You may laugh, as much as you like, but believe me, a woman's lips appear twice as beautiful to a man when they *ask* information as when they *impart* it. No expression of countenance is so charming as the innocent one of a pupil—Emma is aware of this, and she knows much more than she wants to."

"My heart is troubled," said Heloise, anxiously: "how embarrassed I shall be in the presence of such an artificial being! But perhaps she is more natural towards those of her own sex."

"On the whole, she is. But she will not be so to you. See if she does not throw herself into your arms, and entreat you, with a thousand tears, to grant her your friendship. But she is false. She can never love you. For in the first place you are more beautiful, more intelligent, and better than she, and then you still occupy a place in Felix's heart, over which she would reign supreme."

"Oh! do not flatter me," cried Heloise with painful emotion; "that Felix has forgotten me for her, is proof enough that she must be infinitely more beautiful and more amiable than I!"

Isabella looked at her in surprise, while Heloise's face was suffused with blushes.

"My dear friend!" said the former, "what are you thinking of? Did ever the brother of a handsome sister, from gratitude towards nature, renounce the pleasure of looking out for a lady-love? Were you born in Utopia, where men are perhaps satisfied with æsthetic delight?"

"My God!" cried Heloise, "but she is unworthy of him. As his sister, as his best friend, I owe it to him to do all that is in my power, that this unfortunate connection may be dissolved! What shall I do? What do you advise me? I beg of you—!"

"Do you intend to involve me in a conspiracy, child? Listen—to be frank, I must tell you that the interest of *my* heart would rather be to promote this marriage instead of preventing it. However, I believe I am too honest not to find it vexatious that the happiness, and perhaps the morality of so fine a fellow as Felix, should be sported with by a heartless girl. For there is nothing more ruinous for a young man, than a passion for an unworthy object, particularly if it is his first love, as seems to be the case here. It gives him at the most some happy moments, but it robs him of all peace of mind, by putting him at variance with his principles; it degrades him, by lowering in his eyes a sex, to honor which is man's pride, and constitutes a great part of his worth. And then too, I dislike this Emma too much, not to grudge her such an advantageous match. If we could only find some other girl for Felix. Feelings can only be acted upon by other feelings—and the physician who would perform a happy cure on such patients, must, above all others, make use of the homœopathic treatment."

"One thing more," said Heloise, "do you believe that Emma really has any affection for my brother? Is such a heart capable of loving?"

"It loves after its own fashion," replied Isabella. "Felix is handsome, brave, rich, blindly in love—reasons enough for making him a desirable match for Emma. Still, her cousin possesses equal attractions."

"Well then—" inquired Heloise.

"She wishes to act a romance, that is all, for the present," answered Isabella. "I do not believe that she has decided upon any course yet."

Heloise soon after this took leave of her friend, and proceeded to Emma's house. Every step increased the trouble of her mind. Still she was, on the whole, less agitated than in the morning, and during the preceding day. We hardly

dare to decide whether it was the satisfaction of knowing that her rival was so far beneath her, that had done the greater part towards calming her, or whether it was the soothing consciousness of having found one friendly being, who had delivered her from the misery of total isolation. Probably both had considerable effect on her, and when she arrived at Emma's, she was at least outwardly composed.

It is not without trepidation that we undertake to give the reader an account of a meeting which left, in both parties, such mixed impressions, that we fear to lose ourselves in a labyrinth of contradicting feelings, which, however, dwell only too near each other in the human heart.

What Emma, such as she appears to us from Isabella's description—which, we find, delineates so well her characteristic traits, that we do not venture to make any addition, but leave the farther development of her disposition to the progress of our story—what Emma must have felt at the sight of a woman who not only surpassed her in beauty, but whom she also had reason to fear as a close observer, we must leave the intelligent reader to conjecture. Nevertheless, the unassuming modesty of Heloise, which amounted almost to timidity, the gentle sadness of her demeanor, would perhaps have captivated even Emma, had it been possible for her to believe that these were not put on with the view of pleasing. We are not only particularly expert in discovering our own faults in others, but we are also very apt to take their existence for granted. The ambitiously vain, who think much of worldly show, find it difficult to believe in the truth of another's philosophy, who professes to despise these things. The reserved easily doubt the sincerity of their acquaintances, the envious see jealousy in all the world; and particularly, every thing artificial in our own behavior makes us suspicious of the artlessness of others. For this reason hypocrites never believe in truthfulness, nor

coquettes either in that womanly pride which scorns to *solicit* the approbation of the other sex, or in that childlike simplicity which never bestows a thought on such approbation.

It did not enter Emma's mind, that so superior a girl as Heloise could be unconscious of her endowments, and still less, that she did not intend to take advantage of these endowments to the best of her abilities. She did not know, therefore, whether she should think her *very shrewd* or *very simple*, and was more and more inclined to decide for the latter, as she remarked her increasing embarrassment.

The thoughts that were passing through Heloise's mind, during this time, were of a very different nature. If Isabella had raised her courage a little, Emma's fashionable and brilliant appearance now startled her all the more. The grace, ease, and confidence of her manner, dazzled and bewildered the poor girl. She had never dreamt that any one could be so selfish, and at the same time so fascinating. She found Emma a thousand times more charming, a thousand times more beautiful than herself. Isabella was right, it is true, in saying that Emma's was no regular beauty, but for all that, Heloise discovered in her at the second and third glances, charms which the baroness had left entirely unmentioned: small, delicate hands, the prettiest little foot, a mass of glossy curls, and all shown off, by tasteful art, to the best advantage.

"How could I venture to compare myself with her? how could I have the audacity to wish to supplant her?" she thought—and her own lovely image stood before her mind, distorted even to ugliness. Her courage sank more and more—she grew more and more reserved and silent, said the most commonplace things hesitatingly, and those only in answer to questions asked her by Emma and her grandmother.

Her embarrassment, however, became still more painful, when the latter was called away by business, and she found herself alone with Emma. She felt that she ought to speak of Felix—that she could not reasonably expect her companion to commence a confidential conversation. She felt that she ought to assure her of her friendship—of her aid, if she did not want Emma to think that she was against her. She had to invite her to visit her—to speak of her brother's hope of meeting them together—what would Felix, what would Emma think, if she did not?—and yet—how did her noble heart revolt against such falseness; and how unnatural would this step have been to her—how little would she have been inclined to encourage Felix's love, even if she had really been his sister! For imperceptibly, the more she was dazzled by Emma's exterior, the lower did the opinion which she had formed of her interior, fall. There was a want of cordiality, of kindness, of true politeness, in her, and notwithstanding the ease of her manner, it lacked that harmony which only soul can give. Even as a sister, therefore, Emma would not have pleased her; but, suspicious as to the source of this feeling, she called it, with much shame, envy, and thought it her duty to defy it. That Heloise did not experience this struggle with the clearness with which we have here described it, is hardly necessary to explain. Obscure, painful sensations passed confusedly through her bosom, during several minutes, while Emma fixed her eyes on the ground in some embarrassment, and played with her rings. At length Heloise managed to say, with considerable hesitation:

"My brother, Mademoiselle—I hope we shall—I shall have the happiness to see more—often—"

Emma turned her eyes towards her with a searching glance. Irritated by this, Heloise continued, with more confidence:

"My brother has told me how dear you are to him, and I hope you will not refuse a sister's friendship."

"Your friendship," replied Emma, with an expression of much feeling, while she took Heloise's hand and pressed it, "your approbation, are invaluable to me, and I shall do every thing to deserve them."

Heloise returned the pressure, and not without emotion. She felt at this moment almost contemptible beside Emma, and the thought that she had perhaps wronged her, made her show, during their short conversation, a warmth which was not in her heart. Emma spoke of her passion for Felix with a frankness and a strength of expression which several times called up a blush in Heloise's cheek. She complained bitterly of her situation, and appeared to have a very unfavorable idea of her absent betrothed. She hoped, however, that his return might be yet postponed awhile. When old Madame von Willingen returned, Heloise took her leave, secretly rejoicing at the interruption; for she had just thought it her duty to inform Emma of Felix's wish that they should often meet in her apartments. As it was, they parted without having made any agreement.

CHAPTER VI.

HELOISE REGAINS HER COMPOSURE.

Several weeks passed quickly away. It could not be otherwise than that the many new objects which the capital presented to Heloise, excited her interest to some degree, and that, among the great number of acquaintances which she made, there were some that pleased her. Neither could these impressions fail to produce a favorable effect. Her heart recovered by degrees from the severe blows which had bowed it down. Far from being happy, she yet learnt to acquire inward as well as outward calmness. She regained that quiet dignity, that nobleness of demeanor, which, even in the highest circles, makes the absence of a more worldly refinement and ease of manner, unfelt. Madame von Pollwitz, who at first thought the behavior of her young *protegé* very strange, was more and more attracted by the childlike amiability of her disposition; all the older ladies found her charming, the best of the younger ones felt themselves drawn towards her, and even among the worse ones there were few who grudged her endowments of which she herself was hardly conscious, and which seemed to awe the men rather than attract them; for, notwithstanding her extraordinary beauty and the kind affability of her manner, the other sex paid her more deference than homage. All treated her with respect and distinction, but none paid his court to her. While other girls, who possessed hardly the hundredth part of her charms

and her mind, surrounded by admirers, were amusing themselves and those near them, Heloise was perhaps entertained by one only, or conversing with some other less noticed girl, and, wonderful to relate, often even with the older ladies. The reason for this was partly that she inspired the young leaders of the *ton* with too much esteem, for them to hope that empty flatteries would be agreeable to her; partly that her noble deportment and quiet modesty rendered difficult any uncalled-for approach. Society, such as it is, admits only of small-talk: whoever lays open to it deep feelings and thoughts, exposes himself to ridicule. Heloise had too much tact not to see this, but she had neither skill nor uncharitableness enough to give spice to the commonplace discourse on every-day affairs, by interspersing it with scandal; then, too, she knew too little of the characters, and was, besides, too much occupied with her own inward self, to experience a great desire to become better acquainted with them from such conversation. At larger assemblies, therefore, she was usually silent and reserved, and talkative, lively, and entertaining only in the domestic circle. A young girl like Heloise is more qualified to excite warm *feelings*, than to elicit that homage which alone enables her to shine in society.

Thus Emma need not have feared a rival in the beautiful stranger—at least not where the approbation of the other sex in general was concerned. She did not deprive her of any of her admirers, although there was hardly one of their number who, in his heart, did not place Heloise far above Emma. Notwithstanding this, the latter did not seem in the least inclined to attach herself to the sister of her lover, and Felix tried in vain to bring about the wished-for interviews. Heloise did not refuse to do her part in them, and once even conquered her feelings so far as to remind Felix, when he was complaining of seeing Emma so rarely alone, of his plan of meeting her in her apartment. But it was Emma herself

who always contrived skilfully to prevent these meetings, to avoid any agreement with regard to them, or to find means not to keep her appointments. Heloise could not determine what to think of this, but she could not contradict Isabella when she said:

"She fears your moral dignity. She is well aware that you would make use of other arts to charm a lover, than she could show you."

They met from time to time, however, at the houses of mutual acquaintances. They were always very polite and attentive towards each other, but kept far apart, which, on account of the different positions which they occupied in society, was not difficult.

The part which Heloise had to play towards Felix, was far more difficult. He visited her daily, and the principal topic of his conversation was always Emma. However painful this was to our young friend, she could at least see from this circumstance, that she played her part *naturally*—that she had succeeded in hiding the sensations of her heart from Felix. Her manner towards him was, indeed, on the whole, uniformly calm and kind. She was not cheerful, not communicative, when alone with him, but the great loss which she had lately experienced, justified this sadness, and he knew the uncommon strength and depth of her feelings. They had at first had some difficulty with regard to her not wishing to allow any personal demonstrations of his brotherly affection, but he had at last to be satisfied with the declaration "that caresses and tender trifling were entirely incompatible with the serious character of fraternal friendship—that they were only fit for lovers or children, and very unbecoming to grown people."

It could not escape Felix's observation that Heloise was not entirely satisfied with his choice—if his passion for Emma could be called a choice—although she spoke much

of Emma's charms, and praised them highly, when, after her first call, he asked her opinion. But although he had, from his childhood, been accustomed to attach much consequence to his sister's judgment, and, indeed, to take her as his example in all his actions, yet in this case her disapprobation only pained him, without turning him from his course.

"They were not made for each other," he said to himself by way of excuse—"they will grow more intimate by and by." For the present he was very well satisfied that Heloise did not openly express her opinion. As soon as he perceived that his sister was not favorably inclined towards Emma, he was careful not to say any thing about the character of the latter to Heloise, a circumstance from which we can infer that he was less deceived than he seemed, but that he *wished* to deceive himself, in the persuasion that love had deprived him of the power of following his better judgment.

Thus it was unavoidable that the mutual confidence of the brother and sister was by degrees diminished, and that when they met, they were often out of humor and taciturn. Heloise observed this with much pain. My readers will perhaps find her conduct inconsistent with the honesty which we praised in her, and find it difficult to believe that, with so much frankness, she could practise dissimulation longer than a few hours. But be it remembered that injured love, as well as mortified pride, came to her assistance, and that, with the greatest simplicity, a woman can find, in the peculiarities of her sex, and in its position in society—which, in her, admits of a decidedly negative demeanor—means enough to conceal an unrequited affection, whenever such is her serious intention. We must farther consider that Felix had not the slightest suspicion of the reason of some things in her behavior which certainly struck him as very strange sometimes—words which escaped her, or expressions of her countenance which she did not control sufficiently—and which he, occupied with other

things, often hardly noticed, or interpreted to suit himself. For Heloise this state of things was exceedingly oppressive. She was constantly debating with herself; "I will be his sister, and no more!" she often cried, and thought to herself what she should do, if it were really so. She would speak to him freely of Emma, she would seek and find the means of revealing to him all her unworthiness. Did she not see *so* plainly, that, even now already, this love did not bring him any real happiness? Some hours of rapture, but no cheerful days—a momentary taste of bliss, but no lasting contentment. How would it be in future?

"Oh, that I were his sister!" she said with a sigh, and blushed to think that she desired more than fraternal affection from him. "And can I not at least *act* as his sister?" she asked herself. But the thought that she could not much longer conceal her secret from him, and how quickly he would then conjecture the motives which, partly at least, actuated her in opposing his connection with Emma—that perhaps, in spite of all her pains, his heart might still be for Emma—the humiliating idea, that then all the incautious words and actions which he now overlooked, would be easily understood by him—to see herself lowered so far as to become the object of his pity—of Emma's derision—

She shuddered: "No, no!" she cried; "before I can say to him without hesitation, without a blush: 'Felix, I am not your sister; our parents destined me for your wife, but I love you only with a sister's love'—before I can tell him this, he shall not learn my secret. The time will come, once.—And then I will seek my father—to him I will go, to a strange land. Oh! he too has been unhappy—he will understand me.! And I shall at least have the happiness to weep out my poor life on the only bosom which beats for me, in this wide, desolate world!"

Heloise did not confess to herself that one hope still

lived in her heart, which held her chained near her beloved; it whispered to her, with flattering voice, that he would, that he must return to her with redoubled affection—that love which was not founded on esteem could not last. But how was he to learn that the object of his affection did not merit his esteem? An obscure feeling always referred her to Emma's destined husband, when she asked herself this question, and thus she looked forward to the arrival of Baron Angern—for so he was called—with all the anxiety, and yet with all the impatience with which we see a decisive moment draw near.

Meanwhile she gave way to the pain which her disappointment had caused her, as little as was compatible with the strength of this feeling. She had taken a great part of the household duties off the hands of Madame von Pollwitz; she read much, occupied herself with fine needlework, and eagerly took advantage of the opportunities which her present place of residence offered her, to perfect herself in the fine arts.

In music she had already acquired great proficiency under the direction of her tutor, who was fortunately a skilful pianist and a thorough musician. A distinguished music-master and constant practice improved her so much, in the course of the winter, that she acquired the name of one of the best amateur performers in the city. She had always loved the art for its own sake; but we will not answer for it, that the fact that Emma had the reputation of being a brilliant singer, did not increase her present zeal. Her own voice was clear and sweet, but of ordinary compass, and could not compare in power and richness with Emma's, which had for years been cultivated by the best instruction. She sang her little simple airs with such feeling, so much sweetness, as to enchant a small circle of listeners, but she could not think of trying to rival Emma in the brilliant Italian Arias with which she shone in company. Perhaps this was

the principal reason why, hardly conscious of her motive, she preferred to perfect herself in instrumental music. Perhaps, we say, for the human heart is so strangely formed, that the good and the evil, the pure and the impure, are continually changing places in it. The greatest pleasure, however, which Heloise had, was her intercourse with Isabella; it made her partly forget her sorrows, cultivated her mind, and did her heart good.

CHAPTER VII.

ISABELLA.

At length, one morning, Felix announced to Heloise, not without emotion, that Angern had arrived. He had been expected daily for nearly a week past, as he had recently written to the colonel, and had told him in general terms that he would be with them soon. In honor of his arrival there was to be a large party at Colonel Willingen's house on this same evening; the first which had been given there for many years. Immediately upon receipt of the letter preparations for it had been commenced, and the invitations given out for the latest day on which he could be expected. Felix and Heloise were also asked. Both looked forward to the evening with uneasiness. Felix had hardly gone, before Heloise hastened to her friend.

She found her in an excitement, such as she had never witnessed in her before. The tone of her voice was unusually soft—a lovely, natural color was in her cheeks, and tears in her eyes.

"He has just gone," she said, embracing Heloise. "Yes, dearest child, he will always be to my heart the dearest friend. She must not possess him, this miserable Emma! You alone, my own sweet Heloise, you alone are worthy of him, and you must and shall be his!"

Heloise's consternation at her friend's words was mingled with displeasure.

"Do not be angry, dear heart," the other continued; "my heart is so softened that I would say more than I can ex-

press in words. Yes, I still love him—that is, I wish to see him happy. For seven long years I have not seen him. He is changed since then, and yet so much the same. He is just as amiable, as energetic, as manly, as before we parted. His ideal is the very highest; instead of Isabella he now loves the people—all mankind!"

"You surprise me to the utmost," said Heloise, at last; "you never betrayed your heart to me!"

"Will you now, dearest Heloise, hear the history of this poor heart?—many a time I was about to confide it to you, but it seemed to me as if I feared your childlike purity. But at this moment, my Heloise, in this hour, I feel that I am good: I was never bad, only misguided, and now I am good, good like you, my Heloise."

She pressed her to her heart. Long they held each other in a close, fervent embrace, until at length, grown more calm, and quietly seated on the sofa, Isabella unfolded her noble heart to Heloise, who listened with ear and soul.

"You know already," she began, "that I was educated at a large boarding-school. I have often spoken of it to you. On the whole, I felt quite contented there. The glaring faults of our education did not mar our temporary happiness much. While our little heads were, rather negligently, filled with scraps of knowledge, our young hearts had free play. We had our friendships among ourselves, our love-intrigues with the brothers of our companions, with the cousins who were allowed to visit us now and then, or with the cadets and students who passed our windows, and always managed to meet us in our walks. We were kept very strict; no love-affair ever went farther than an interchange of looks and words. Our inward self remained entirely uncultivated, and indeed, unawakened; no one thought of drawing it out. As in all such institutions, only the mass was considered, and the scale that was fit for that, was applied to each individual.

Thus there could be no lack of perverseness and injury. We were brought up, but remained undeveloped.

"In my seventeenth year I returned to my parent's house. My father's position made it necessary for him to live in considerable style. He was obliged often to invite the officers of his regiment—others were asked to meet them. My mother, of course, was not then the dignified old lady that she now is; she still painted, played the propriety-parts in private theatricals, and an admirer, who remained at a respectful distance, was not unwelcome to her. Thus I found myself, from the beginning, drawn into a whirlpool of dissipation. No fashionable folly but what I took a part in it. There was no thought of serious reflection. The baron was one of the most brilliant men of our circle. Thirteen years younger, and, consequently, not the cold, hardened egotist that he now is, he was the leader of the fashion, occupied an important station, and—was in love with me. When he offered himself to me, all my young friends envied me, my parents thought the match advantageous, and so I became his wife before I was twenty years old.

"The ideas with which I entered upon the married state, were gathered from novels, and consequently romantic enough. With regard to my husband, I had deceived myself—I can scarcely reproach *him* with deceiving me. I had hardly been married a few months, before he appeared to me in a totally different light. It seemed as if I had awakened from a dream. On the discovery of his numerous infidelities, I passed through all the gradations of feeling of which a woman's heart, while yet uncorrupted, is capable. The first drove me to despair—the tenth left me indifferent. I was too proud to revenge myself by following his example; and besides, I found none that pleased me among those who sought my favor, for you can well imagine, that a young woman in my situation, not ugly, and neglected by her husband,

was not without admirers. But my heart yearned for love. Years passed, and Heaven had not yet granted me the happiness of being a mother. My mind was but half developed, and, from *ennui*, I undertook to carry on some insignificant intrigues. My heart had no part in them, they only fed my fancy. How different, my Heloise, how very different was it when Angern appeared, and paid me attentions. My dear friend—you will soon know him: he has not the thousandth part of Felix's beauty, but you never saw a nobler bearing, nor a more intellectual expression of countenance. He had seen much of the world, and knew the human heart and woman well. At first, I thought I only feared him, I did not know what it was, that made me, in his presence, timid, embarrassed, and uneasy. His affection honored me—in order to be a fit companion for him, I read, I studied. His advice guided and controlled me. But soon, too soon, our relation grew too passionate, almost annihilating. Things could not remain as they were—he longed to possess me, and because he neither would nor could dishonor me, he urged a divorce—I consented!

"Before this plan could be put into execution, Angern was obliged to make a journey, on some important business. In eight weeks he was to return, and, thinking that I might perhaps need his aid, we resolved to leave the disclosure of my sentiments until then. As, just at that time, I saw less of my husband than ever—for he was at the feet of a certain opera-singer, who occupied all of his time that he was not obliged to devote to his business—I hoped to have little difficulty in carrying my point.

"Heloise, I was never bad. I was naturally good and kind—love had ennobled me—I could have made the greatest sacrifices; but I was not religious. I never thought of God. I believed in him, because I had heard him named from my childhood, but my soul did not feel his existence. Dear-

est Heloise, I had been married six years; now I felt that I was about to become a mother! You gaze at me in astonishment, and now your cast-down eyes ask me how it is possible that it could be so, when another's image was in my heart. You good, innocent child! may you never experience the constraint of a legality from which no wife can secretly withdraw entirely, before she is firmly resolved to do so publicly and for ever, and, in renouncing it, to renounce the world at the same time. No words can express what passed in my soul at this discovery. I had heard a thousand times that God *punishes* us to make us better; that he purifies our hearts with the fire of affliction; that he cleanses our sinful desires with the flood of our tears. This I knew, my Heloise; but now, now *I felt*, and felt deeply, that He must be an inexpressibly kind Father, who by *blessings* warns us against doing evil; who obstructs the gate to sin with his richest favors. Now my poor heart would have an object on which to bestow its love. As my husband, I despised the baron; as the father of my child, I felt I must honor him. I was terrified at the thought of my former purpose, and when Angern returned he found me another being.

"I had a hard struggle—Angern was more passionate than ever; but there was probably a feeling in him which at last made me conquer. We would be friends, inseparable, devoted friends, but never more. Angern declared himself able to play this part only at a distance, and still he could not leave. A lawsuit with Emma's grandparents had brought him here and made his presence necessary. To free himself from these bonds, he resolved, at last, to enter into a contract by which he was betrothed to Emma, then a charming child of thirteen. The distance at which the period for the fulfilment of this engagement lay, made the much heavier bonds which he thereby subjected himself to, appear light to him. Of his heart he believed he was sure; and he was right, for, even to-day, I

have had the assurance from his lips, that, since he tore himself from me, he has never loved again. He traversed Europe, Asia, went to America; his heart is healed, and his mind has drunk in the world.

"As far as I am concerned, Heaven obviously blessed my sacrifice. *Three* children were granted me, in quick succession—three *girls*, so that they could be wholly mine. Their love makes me happy, their education occupies me—my heart and my mind are satisfied!"

Heloise was deeply moved. She pressed her friend's hand fervently, and her lips expressed in affectionate words how entirely she agreed with such truly womanly sentiments. At length she inquired, "Has Baron Angern seen Emma yet?"

"No: the first hours naturally belonged to his old friend; but he knows her already from my letters; and even if that were not the case, one glance from this sharp-sighted man would be sufficient for him to see through her. But it may be that he will see through her and still be caught."

"Impossible!" was Heloise's reply.

"The mere idea is insupportable to me. You, dear Heloise, you must win him—to you I will give him up, but to no one else!"

It was in vain that Heloise protested against this idea. Isabella came back to it again and again, and all that her young friend could obtain from her was the promise that the subject should not be mentioned again. She then informed her that she had purposely not made mention of Emma's affair with Felix, to Angern: "I will leave your brother," she added, "to do his part in it himself. The character of a tale-bearer would be beneath me, and it is not that, but only my criticism, which Emma has to fear in me; for, although she perhaps prefers Felix, she will not disdain to make a conquest of Angern; of that your own eyes shall convince you this evening."

CHAPTER VIII.

ANGERN.

It was late, and the rest of the company were already assembled, when Heloise entered the saloon of Colonel Willingen with Madame von Pollwitz. The latter had looked upon the invitation with some contempt, and expressed her doubts whether she had better go, but had at last willingly yielded to Heloise's wishes, for she was curious to see how these two proud old people, who lived only for their own comfort, would fulfil the unwonted labor of giving a large and brilliant *soirée.*

Heloise's heart, on the contrary, beat high in expectation of this evening, as if it were to bring a final decision of her destiny. Was it the secret hope, which she was hardly conscious of herself, that he to whom Emma was betrothed would not relinquish his claim on her?—did she think that his return would perhaps give occasion to convince Felix of Emma's unworthiness, or that Emma herself might prefer Angern, and Felix return to her with renewed affection?—dimly the thought floated before her mind, that her fate too depended on Angern's arrival. Who that could have noticed the particular care which, hardly aware of it herself, she bestowed upon her toilet, would not have concluded that she entered into the idea which Isabella had hinted at, and intended to make a conquest of him for herself? And yet nothing was more distant from her heart. But a low voice seemed to say to her that she would this evening be compared with Emma—that to-night, Felix would make a new choice.

She still remained faithful to the black dress, which flowed in heavy, rich, silken folds around her elegant form—for she had left off deep, but not yet half mourning—but a costly *berthe* of black blonde fell around the fashionably low neck of the dress, and showed off to the best advantage her gracefully sloping shoulders, and her finely formed bust; and the short sleeves, from which depended broad blonde trimmings, which, together with half-long white kid gloves, concealed but imperfectly the most beautiful arm that had ever been created—all these approached by some decided steps to the world and its pleasures. She made no opposition when Lisette, whose greatest joy it was to dress her charming young lady as becomingly as possible, placed a white rose in her hair, whose sole ornament, until now, had been its beautiful color—that which is usually termed *cendrè*—and its massive richness. For the first time, too, since her mother's death, she opened a little casket which she had bequeathed to her, which contained, besides many rings, ear-rings, and other gay trinkets, two diamond breast-pins, small and plainly mounted, but the stones of such singular purity and beauty, that their value far exceeded that of all the rest of the jewelry in the casket. With one of these she secured her *berthe*, and with the other a black velvet ribbon around her neck. Heloise's neck was of peculiar beauty: it was the neck of a queen, as indeed her whole appearance, in spite of all rural simplicity, had a decidedly noble air.

When she came to the dressing room of Madame von Pollwitz, the old lady and her maid both could not find words enough to express their admiration; for the excitement of the evening had given her cheeks a higher color than usual, and her eyes sparkled, as if not to be out-rivalled by the borrowed jewels.

Nevertheless, she now entered the saloon quietly, and observed by few. A card table was ready for her companion,

and she placed herself among the other young girls, who were seated in long rows along the back wall of the apartment.

"We are sitting here as if we were at the theatre," said Heloise's neighbor, a bright, sprightly girl, after bidding her good evening; "the piece is called, 'The little Coquette,' and yonder is the stage." Heloise's eyes followed the direction of hers to the opposite side of the room, where Emma stood, conversing with a stranger. She was dressed with the utmost simplicity, in perfectly plain white muslin, and her glossy brown hair, with the exception of a couple of rose-buds, entirely without ornament. Heloise felt a little mortified when she thought of her own unusually careful toilet. Her innocent heart did not suspect that Emma's simplicity was a thousand times more studied than her own scrupulous care. The little white figure looked right charming, her well formed contours standing out in relief against the dark window curtains, (which were let down and reached to the ground,) and looking upwards, with that innocent, inquiring expression in her face, that was so becoming to her.

The figure of the stranger, whose noble bearing gave him the appearance of being taller than he was in reality, was also placed in the best light by the dark background. His features were well formed, without, however, being in the least handsome. A dark, piercing eye was all that distinguished them. A certain condescending expression in his otherwise agreeable countenance, was hardly to be mistaken. Their conversation had already lasted the whole evening, and Emma's stock of questions about the Rocky Mountains, the back-woods, and the Indians, seemed inexhaustible.

Heloise's eye glanced around the room in search of Felix. At length she discovered him in a distant corner. He was leaning over the piano, apparently absorbed in looking at some music; but the violence with which he turned over the leaves, the convulsive haste with which he threw down one

book and snatched up another, but still more his glowing face, and the furious glances which he sent across the room from time to time, were proofs of the most vehement agitation. Heloise had already come to the conclusion that the stranger must be Angern, when Isabella, who had been walking up and down the room with an acquaintance, stopped before her and offered her her other arm. Heloise accepted it with joy. She suffered deeply, and felt inwardly grateful, when her friend, struck by her beauty, and agitated by various thoughts, fixed her eyes upon her with a look of deep affection. The look meant: 'You, good, lovely one, are worthy of my giving him up to you!' But Heloise did not understand it so—she saw in it only that love for which her heart was thirsting.

Every trace of the morning's agitation had disappeared from Isabella's face. She was too much a woman of the world to give way to sentiment in mixed society. She calmly continued her conversation with her companion, but after they had taken a few turns in the saloon, she skilfully managed to direct their course to the corner of the room where Felix was standing, and whispered to Heloise, "Speak to your brother, his behavior is too conspicuous." At the same time she stopped—as if from interest in her conversation—with her back to Felix, let go of Heloise's arm, and managed, with an adroitness peculiar to herself, to draw the gentleman with whom she was talking, deeper and deeper into the subject.

Heloise approached close to the young man; "Good evening, Felix," she said, with a forced smile.

Felix started: "So you have come at last! I had not seen you yet—it is terribly hot here!"

Heloise's heart beat quicker: "Then he has at least missed me," she thought. "What is the matter, Felix?" she asked in a low voice, and, moved with the deepest pity for him, looked

into his eyes once more, for the first time in many days, with her old, earnest expression of fervent affection.

"I entreat you, Heloise," he said, in a voice which suppressed passion made unnaturally hoarse, "do not drive me to distraction! all is over! You are right—you all are right! Leave me alone now!"

"Who is right?" asked Heloise in alarm—but Felix, without answering her, was about to rush past her, hardly knowing what he did, when the surrounding crowd separated, and Emma, on Angern's arm, was seen advancing to the piano from the opposite end of the saloon. She was beaming with youth and happiness, and many a sweetly smiling glance did she throw to this side and that, as she swept along, certain of seeing each one caught up eagerly by one or the other of her admirers. Now she was seated at the open piano, and the look which she cast over the instrument, and which met the anger-flashing eye of her excited lover, said no more than all the others. With the greatest coolness, sure of her victory, she ran over the keys with her little white master-hands. A dense crowd of listeners had assembled around the piano, as is usual on such occasions.

"What do you think she will favor us with?" asked Isabella of Heloise, who stood by her side.

"Probably one of her Italian Arias, which she sings so well," was the answer.

"You are very much mistaken! She is wise enough to know that Angern has heard such things performed better, and he is, of course, the one towards whom all her artillery is directed to-night."

At this moment Emma, with a clear, melodious voice, commenced singing a charming little song, which penetrated to the inmost soul of Heloise, who had often sung it to Felix in their childhood: a popular song from their part of the country, which Felix, because it was a great favorite of his,

had, with her aid, set to music some time ago, and given to Emma. It was one of those simple German melodies, so full of heartiness and genuine expression, which resound from the depths of the bosom to the innermost heart of the hearer. The words, as is often the case in these songs, were more expressive of ingenuousness and depth of feeling than remarkable for their poetic worth. They were these:

"The soldiers are passing with music so loud;
Of their swords and their feathers they're mightily proud.

The girls in a hurry run out in the street;
The one gives a nod, and another looks sweet.

Run after your lovers as far as you will,
I'll stay in my chamber, so cosy and still.

What care I how much you all run, gape, and stare;
My true love's at work in yon shop over there.

By land and by water, north, south, east, or west,
My own darling boy is the one I love best.

What if I am busy from morning till night?
The thought of my true love's my only delight.

And though now and then with another I stroll,
Yet *his* image sparkles and shines in my soul;

And if to another I *do* sometimes smile,
My boy, he is safe in my heart all the while."

A deafening applause rewarded Emma, who, in fact, had sung the little song with the most charming innocence of the most perfect actress. Heloise's eye rested on Felix, whose countenance was the mirror of his varying emotions. He looked disconcerted, appeared for a while forcibly to retain anger and rage, until at last the expression of passion softened down into one of deep sadness. During the noise of the applause, he whispered to his sister, while he tried to hide

a certain sense of shame by a forced smile: "The enchantress! My heart is like wax in her hands!" and, turning quickly, intended to escape unnoticed from the throng; but at this moment Emma approached close to his side, as if she was going to look for something in the heap of music before him. Heloise, trembling, cast down her eyes; she could not witness the exchange of looks that reconciled the lovers; but she heard distinctly Emma's words, spoken in an undertone, "On your knees you shall beg my pardon to-morrow!" Felix stayed; Emma returned to her seat at the piano, and sang a brilliant Italian Cavatina, for which Angern thanked her much more politely than for the first little song.

Now Heloise was asked to sing; but she refused decidedly; it seemed to her as if her simple melodies had been desecrated by Emma. She was, however, willing to play, and was enough of a proficient not to let her agitation have any effect on her performance. She pulled her gloves off her beautiful arms in silence, and played, with that precision and dexterity for which she was remarkable, one of those elaborate and brilliant, but cold, concert-pieces, in which modern composition abounds. Solely occupied with the correct fulfilment of her task, she did not notice that Angern, who had already been struck with her pure, dignified beauty, regarded her with the deepest attention. When she had finished, a remark of his, about music, drew her immediately, even before Isabella had introduced him to her, into a conversation with him. Not until the baroness joined them did Heloise remember the words that had escaped her in the morning; but the adroitness of her two companions left no room for the embarrassment which was rising in her. The conversation flowed on smoothly, sustained more by Isabella and Angern than by herself, and yet always with so much attention towards her, that she seemed the central point of it.

When she arrived at home that night, and, in her quiet

chamber, reviewed the evening, she would have felt that satisfaction which the enjoyment of hours passed in the society of the intellectual and the kind-hearted gives us, had not the wound of her heart commenced to bleed anew; for this evening had only served to convince the poor child, still more, of the incomprehensible influence which a worthless coquette had acquired over one to whom she felt herself bound with every tie which is dear and sacred to a woman's heart. She had seen more plainly than ever, to-night, that Felix loved Emma against his own better judgment. For what else could he mean by his "You are right—you all are right!" "How little must he care for my opinion," she sighed, "or how strong must his love be, that it makes him forget and overlook entirely what formerly he thought so much of!" With these reflections, without bestowing a single thought on Angern, and with a thousand tears, she at length fell asleep.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STORY COMES TO A STAND.

Yet Angern was not the man who could long remain indifferent to a girl whom he distinguished in any way. His mind and judgment were so superior, that a woman's worth might almost have been measured by the degree in which she knew to appreciate his attentions. Now only did Heloise learn to know the charm of intellectual, inciting conversation; the invaluable advantage to be derived from hearing the interchange of ideas of superior minds. Since Angern's return, Isabella staid at home almost every evening, and her friend was soon again a regular guest at her tea-table. Three or four other men of intellect—rarely more—commonly joined them, and Heloise had a standing invitation, "to take the making of the tea off her hands," as Isabella said, with a smile. Heloise, eager for information and susceptible of improvement as she was, felt deeply grateful towards Isabella for this distinction. The conversation turned on subjects taken from divers departments: belles-lettres, philosophy, history, political economy, but above all, the great questions of the day. On all these Heloise heard persons of mind give and defend their views. She herself, as was suitable to her youth, was mostly a listener. But the careful education she had received had sufficiently developed her mind to enable her to say, with the Princess of Este, in Goethe's Tasso:

> "I do rejoice, when learned men are speaking,
> That I full well can understand their meaning."

A new world seemed to open to her. Particularly in the examination of the comprehensive questions of the rights of man and the people. Among the circle was one—the kindest, mildest man in the world, but who nevertheless, like Caligula of the Romans, could have wished that all the tribe of journalists had but one head, and for himself, the power to strike it off at one blow. He was highly aristocratic, of the most consequential historical school, was wont to quote Leo and Görres,* and there was hardly one violation of the spirit of the age, which Heloise did not hear him justify, only because it had a historical foundation.

An intimate friend of the aristocrat was one who belonged to the liberal party, had fought in the war of liberty, and bore the iron cross on his breast. He wished for improvement, but was at the same time conservative, and so true a royalist that he was often not a little embarrassed when he tried to erect the new edifice on legal ground, which was so covered with rubbish and ruins, that he could find no room for his structure. Yet he was noble and intellectual, and Isabella usually agreed with him. For women of a better class are only revolutionists when unnaturally perverted; even if they love liberty, they hold morality still higher, which is the protection and guard of their elevated station, and has its foundation in the conservative principle. Such views were also those most familiar to Heloise, for they were, in fact, those in accordance with which her foster-mother, with all her aristocratic dignity, had lived, allowing with pleasure all those renovations which could be advantageous to her tenants, and willingly sacrificing many a prescriptive right of nobility, if by so doing she could promote the common good.

Angern went much farther. He too, while yet a boy, had,

* Two distinguished German writers, champions of the legitimate historical school.

with the purest enthusiasm, taken a part in the campaign against Germany's oppressor. During the years spent at the University, his name had stood in the black-book of government, and he had long borne about in his heart the ideal of a constitution, the realization of which, his own judgment had told him, was impossible. His decidedly liberal views had excluded him from the government-service, such as it was; a residence of several years in the United States of America had only served to open his eyes more completely to the defects at home. Yet he was far too sensible to seek for the cause of these defects in the *monarchy*, or to ascribe proletarianism to the mistakes of the *government*, and too honest to wish forcibly to make room where his friend of the liberal school could not find any, by a sudden overthrow or wanton demolition. But he discovered among the ruins themselves, sometimes even buried deep beneath the rubbish, the finest blocks for laying a durable foundation, so that it only seemed to him necessary to remove this rubbish, and cut away a few stones that were already so loose that their sudden fall threatened great danger. *Reformation* was what he desired—decided reformation: remodelling, but not revolution. Heloise was often startled to see the dauntlessness with which he applied the knife to points which she had deemed sacred. She had never doubted the divine rights of royalty, and early accustomed herself secretly to transfer something of "the grace of God" to the nobility. But she listened attentively and thoughtfully to the noble speaker, and by degrees it grew lighter and lighter within her.

There was also a Red Republican who often joined the circle, whose white vest and kid gloves did not seem quite in accordance with his bloody theories. He was wont to smile contemptuously when the deeds of 1813 and 1814 were spoken of, and liked to give "the German Michel" a blow across the head. Heine was his favorite, and he worshipped

the French. Heloise could not endure him, but Isabella thought him a man of honor, and the friends let him do as he liked, and suffered him to develope his whole system of revolution and destruction.

The fanatical dream of Socialism, and that poisonous weed, Communism, alone found no advocates in Isabella's noble and moral circle of friends.

Since that first morning, Isabella had never again hinted to Heloise, by word or mien, at her wish with regard to Angern. But his preference soon manifested itself decidedly—if not in words, that is, by an open declaration—yet in the tender respect with which he, a man so superior and so much older, treated the young girl. His voice softened when he spoke to her, and with the most amiable attention, he explained to her circumstances with which she was not familiar, recommended books, and showed her such marks of preference as a young lady in society can accept without thereby giving any encouragement. These attentions had been increased so gradually, that our young heroine was in the full enjoyment of them before she knew it. When she at last thought of the possible consequences, it seemed to her too late to avoid them, without making herself conspicuous.

In the meanwhile Angern had by no means neglected Emma and her family. He occasionally took dinner there, when the time always passed very slowly, and often, after leaving Isabella in the evening, he went to a ball or a *soireé*, where he found Emma as the belle of the evening, surrounded by admirers, and always paid her many little insignificant attentions. He did not seem to remark any of her usual flirtations, hardly appeared to notice Felix—although he was always near Emma, and often drew upon himself the general attention by his ill humor and capriciousness—but whenever he came in contact with him, treated him with such distinguished politeness, that he could not give vent to his irritation.

Thus a full month had passed since Angern's arrival, and not one of the parties had come forward with an open declaration. It is easy to understand what induced Angern to maintain such a careful reserve. With his penetration, he could soon observe how matters stood. He saw through Emma at once, and no idea was more foreign to his mind, than that of making a coquette, full of selfishness, and without the least depth of soul, his partner for life.

But the Willingen family regarded him as betrothed to Emma—he himself had given them the right to do so, in an hour when the wound caused by the loss of Isabella was still fresh, and, with the hope of domestic happiness, his usual caution had also deserted him. Emma's extreme youth, and the *naïveté* of the girl of fourteen, had led him to hope, at that time, that, after having travelled through the world, and imbibed its wonders, he might, by the side of a pretty, pleasing, and improvable wife, in the possession of an independent fortune, find a haven of rest. Besides, he was determined to tear himself away, at any cost, and the distance of the goal had prevented him from viewing it plainly. Now he stood close before it, and he felt the full weight of his fetters. But he had been chained of his own free will; only Emma's inclination, when she should be capable of judging for herself, was to be consulted—the possibility of his withdrawing, had not been thought of. The affair between Emma and Felix was therefore a real relief to him; Emma could not have shown more plainly what she thought of her engagement, than by encouraging the attentions of another suitor. He was uncertain whether her grandparents knew of it or not; but at any rate it was Emma's duty to inform them or him of her decision. If he took the first step, he could hardly escape the accusation of having broken the contract. And he was too well acquainted with the selfishness of the old people, not to know that this circumstance, in the new settlement about

the division of the inheritance, would be taken advantage of to oblige him to make sacrifices for which he had less inclination than ever, now that his long and expensive travels had made considerable gaps in the fortune left him by his father. He therefore resolved to continue his acquaintance with Emma as her cousin and friend, without giving the family reason to expect more than heretofore—and to wait patiently for Emma's or Felix's declaration. The conduct of the latter, whose fortune enabled him to offer Emma his hand at any time, and, as far as he, Angern, could judge of the old people, to supplant him in their estimation, was perfectly incomprehensible to him. He had too great a knowledge of mankind, not to see that the passionate youth loved Emma honorably, and intended marriage. Why then, did he not speak?

And the same question might be asked by our readers, who have heard Felix express his intention only to await Angern's arrival in order to explain to him his sentiments and woo Emma openly. And the reasons for his delay might be more difficult to give than those in Angern's case. For it can only be ascribed to the strange influence which Emma, contrary to his own better judgment, had acquired over him. Scenes like that described in the last chapter, were daily repeated. Felix, tormented by jealousy, and a dark suspicion of Emma's falseness, vowed a thousand times, that he would tear himself from her.

But a single look from her brought him back to her feet —to her *arms;* for she felt plainly that she must make the hours of reconciliation the most blissful for him, in order not to lose the power of reconciling him again. After such moments he would have gone to Angern to disclose all to him, and, in Emma's name, give up all claim to the disputed part of the inheritance, which he promised to make up for by the double amount. But Emma urged him to stay—she entreated him not to spoil all by a too hasty disclosure. Her grand-

parents, obstinate old people that they were, would never consent to her union with him, if they were, by so doing, to lose the inheritance, which for years past they had accustomed themselves to regard as secure property, and on which, as she had accidentally learned, they had already taken up a capital, for a part of the payment of her expensive education. Angern must draw back, she said, Angern must voluntarily renounce the inheritance, before her grandparents could be won. She was sure he would soon see that she could not suit him, and would turn his attentions to another. If Felix was to ask her in marriage of her grandparents now, the certain result would be a refusal, and she would be commanded—she added, weeping—to follow that detested Angern to the altar.

Emma was remarkably eloquent in these conversations, and never let Felix go, without his having promised her not to take any step in this affair without her knowledge. While she took all this pains, she had an ally in a secret suspicion which arose in Felix, and, though at first but slight, soon crept through his veins like a slowly corroding poison: namely —whether Emma did not perhaps, after all, wish for this delay, in order to gain time to choose between her two lovers. Thus, even amidst Emma's protestations of love, he could not come to a real enjoyment of his bliss. He was completely out of tune inwardly—neglected his business at the Legation, entirely against his usual custom and habits, which were those of almost military punctuality, to such a degree, that he received a reprimand from his ambassador, which pained him deeply, because he was conscious that he had deserved it—and felt, as day after day passed on, more and more angry with himself, and more and more dissatisfied and miserable. Heloise he saw more rarely than ever, and always for a short time only. Any confidential discourse was avoided by both,

with equal reserve. Thus it happened that Felix remained ignorant of the fact that Heloise saw Angern every day.

It was said that Isabella was in poor health, and that Heloise, who accompanied Madame von Pollwitz into society, which had few attractions for her, less frequently than in the beginning of the winter, staid with her to keep her company. Felix, occupied by but one idea, did not make any farther inquiries.

Emma was a closer observer, and it can hardly be doubted that the fear of seeing herself so soon supplanted, and that by Heloise, who, by her moral superiority, and as the sister of Felix, was the object of her continual jealousy, was the main-spring of her reluctance to letting Angern go so easily. We do not believe that she intended to give up Felix for him. Felix was richer, younger, and handsomer than Angern; he was blindly in love with her, and could be guided by her caprices—while Angern, on the other hand, even if he loved her, would probably play the part of Mentor with her. She hardly had any regular plan. She had taken a good deal of pains to win Angern's approbation, had turned *naïve*, sentimental, and literary for his sake—and should she now calmly suffer him to give her up without a struggle? She could not endure the idea that this connection, which for so long had appeared so romantic to her, should now all of a sudden come to such a flat conclusion. She hoped for a scene—for an *eclat* of some sort; she did not know herself how she would have it end; only not so very quietly—at least a duel, or an elopement, or something of the kind. In all probability, too, she had judged correctly of her grandparents' sentiments—for the present she wished only for delay.

Then, too, her little head was just now occupied with entirely different things, the romance of which would not chord very well with the dry reality of a marriage with one of the hundred-thousand German noblemen. The war in Spain, be-

tween the two opposite parties, had long since divided the fair politicians of the capital into two bodies. Emma had, so far, been on the side of the Liberals, for a portrait of Muñoz, which, in passing by a print-shop, she saw in the window, had enchanted her to such a degree, that a copy of it, in an elegant gilt frame, soon hung in her room. But when Don Carlos was forced to seek shelter in England, and his followers, deprived of their arms and means of subsistence, dispersed to all sides, one of them, who, as one of the adjutants of Zumala Caraguy, had frequently been named in the papers, had found his way to the city where our scene lies. All the young ladies were exceedingly curious to see the famous Spanish hero. But—the fair Carlists were somewhat taken aback. Don Perez de Collado—for so was the interesting stranger called—had dull, coarse features, was of small stature, very thin, and of a yellow, rather than pale complexion; but a pair of large, melancholy eyes, so black and burning that nothing like them had ever yet been seen at the North, and boldly surmounted by bushy, equally black eyebrows, made up for a good deal. This, at least, was the opinion of Emma, who found, in fact, the presence of one Carlist, particularly one in distress, a thousand times more interesting than a whole army of distant Liberals. Collado was destitute of all the necessaries of life. To gain his living in an honorable manner, he informed the public, by a short advertisement in the papers, that, in order not to be obliged to beg or starve, he was desirous of giving instruction in the Spanish language. The advertisement created a great sensation—it had something touching from the lips of a hero. A class of young ladies from the first families, who were willing to pay a double fee, was soon formed. Emma was one of the most zealous among them. She was burning with impatience to read Calderon in the original. Soon, however, she was not satisfied with learning the language

alone. Collado suppressed a laugh when German ladies performed Spanish ballads to the piano. He taught Emma, a charming, intelligent scholar, to sing Castilian Romanzas and Andalusian Chansonetas to the guitar, with all the wild fire of the Southerners. All this was so interesting! And should she now, just when she was getting on so well, interrupt herself by a new engagement, by all the privileges of an acknowledged lover, all the preparations for her wedding, etc., etc.? There would be time enough for that when she was tired of Spanish!

CHAPTER X.

THE STORY PROCEEDS.

Thus it was as unexpected as unwelcome to Emma, when suddenly, by a common accidental occurrence, an explanation was rendered unavoidable.

It was late in the month of March; the breath of spring was already in the air, and Heloise longed for her native village, when, one morning, after a stormy night, the broad streets of the capital were covered with snow, three feet deep. Departing winter seemed to invite to the enjoyment of his pleasures by the richest of his gifts. Without delay a moonlight sleighing-party was planned by the male portion of the juvenile nobility, a ballroom in the neighborhood was hired, and after a few noble married ladies had promised to patronize the *impromptu*, the gentlemen were soon scattered over all the fashionable parts of the city to invite the young ladies to take a part in the proposed excursion. Felix's heart beat high in expectation of the evening, for although he had not been able, for some time past, to resist Emma's kind proposition to meet her at her milliner's, who placed a comfortable upper room at their disposal, yet he, for his part, was rather ashamed of this secrecy. He longed to call the woman he loved *his*, publicly and rightfully, and though such a sleigh-ride would have no important consequences, it was still something of a satisfaction to him, to be able to appear with Emma in public after so much secrecy.

He would have liked to give Emma a hint of his purpose, but there was no time for that. He therefore called on her

grandmother, informed her of the plan for the sleigh-ride, and, in the politest terms, asked permission to drive Emma. The old lady was silent for a while. At length she said: "I am afraid, sir, that this will not be possible."

Felix turned crimson. "Why not, madam?"

"It is more suitable," replied Madame von Willingen, drily, "that Emma should ride with her cousin, Baron Angern."

Felix restrained himself with difficulty. "Baron Angern," he replied, stiffly, "as far as I know, will not be of the party."

"Indeed!" remarked the grandmother, in the same tone as before. "Well, then at any rate, it is better that Emma should not join it without asking him about it, for she is engaged to Baron Angern."

Felix rose. His whole face was in a glow. "Very well," he said, with a low bow, "then I have, for the present, nothing more to say, until I have asked Baron Angern if he lays claim to this right."

He went, with the firm resolution of having an immediate explanation with Angern. In passing through the hall, he asked the servant if Miss von Willingen was at home.

"Yes, sir," the man replied, in a tone which had a shade of contempt in it; "but her Spanish master is here again, and she must not be interrupted."

"Truly," thought Felix, as he walked along with hasty strides, "I am tired of forever playing so humble a part! Now or never! I will no longer share her with arrogant cousins and Spanish fortune-hunters!"

Angern received him with respectful civility. He conjectured what brought him, and Felix did not long leave him in doubt. He declared to him, in a few words, that he loved Emma, and wished to marry her; that heretofore he had not known whether or not to believe the report that she was engaged to Angern, but had just heard it confirmed by Madame

von Willingen herself; and that he had come to ask him frankly, how far he agreed to this arrangement.

"Permit me, first, to ask *you* a question: Did Miss Emma know that you intended to call on me?"

"No," replied Felix, without hesitation.

"And have you reason to hope that she would approve of this step, if she were made aware of it?"

"Does your answer to *my* question depend on my reply to *yours?*" asked Felix.

"It does indeed," said Angern.

"Well, then I can say, without indiscretion, that I have reason to hope that the young lady would not reject me, if she were free."

"In that case she *is* free," replied Angern. "Let Emma herself decide whether I am to give up my claims or not;" and then, with more candor than was contained in these words, he began to explain to Felix, in detail, all the circumstances which bound him to Emma. Only his opinion of her, and the conviction that, even without the intervention of her lover, he never would have made himself the victim of an imprudent contract, he carefully concealed.

Felix, on the other hand, frank as always, expressed the hope that Emma's grandfather, who was at the same time her guardian, would be satisfied with a new agreement which would conform with the inclinations of both parties. Whatever he could contribute to it, should be done—for it was not the heiress that he loved in Emma—and an equal division seemed to him the most reasonable.

Angern begged him to let the affairs of the inheritance rest for the present; that he, for his part, was resolved to avoid bringing up the suit, and had no thoughts of taking an ignoble advantage of Emma's change of mind. They then agreed that Felix should, without delay, ask Emma's hand in marriage of her grandparents, and should be authorized to

refer to Angern's remark, that Emma might decide for herself. Felix had long ago forgotten the sleigh-ride. He went home immediately and wrote a formal letter of proposal to the colonel, in which, in order to prevent a refusal, he mentioned his interview with Angern.

Meanwhile Emma was sitting at home in the worst possible humor. She had heard of the intended excursion from a friend who called, and was in hourly expectation of Felix's coming to invite her to take a part in it. As all the other gentlemen knew that Waldeck had had the intention of driving Miss von Willingen, and had therefore gone to call on her, no one else gave her an invitation. Hour after hour passed away, but no Felix appeared. Her vexation increased rapidly. Her grandmother said nothing about his call; the shrewd old lady had long since had an idea how matters stood, and, impatient at Angern's protracted silence on the subject, had taken the first opportunity to bring about an explanation. Emma, accustomed never to be frank with her grandmother, did not show her vexation before her, pretended not to know any thing about the sleigh-ride, and grew, in the course of the day, by concealing with difficulty her state of mind, more and more exasperated against Felix.

In the evening, while the family were at tea, the servant brought the colonel a letter, with the words, "From Mr. von Waldeck."

"What does this mean?" thought Emma; "can he have—in spite of my request—?" and her vexation increased with every moment.

Meanwhile the colonel had examined the seal—then the direction—then the seal again. At last he opened the letter, laid it down, pulled his spectacles slowly out of his pocket, and still more slowly out of the case, put them on his nose, and stretched out his hand for the letter, in order to read the signature. Then he put the letter down again, told the ser-

vant to light a candle, saying that he could not read by the lamp alone, held the letter behind the candle which was brought, and finally read it.

During this time Emma could hardly contain herself, for impatience. Suddenly a jingling of bells was heard in the street—the famous sleigh-ride had commenced, and, in order to take advantage of the good sleighing in the city, the whole party drove through all the principal streets, before proceeding to the place of their destination. Emma's indignation towards Felix reached its highest pitch. She firmly resolved to revenge herself. The colonel had put the letter in his pocket and was leisurely sipping his tea. At length he sent the servant out of the room.

"Tell me, Emma," he began, "on what terms are you with Angern now?"

"On what terms I am with my cousin, my dear grandfather?" asked Emma, as if she did not know at all what he meant. "Why, as usual—we are good friends."

"I mean, Emma, has he ever hinted to you, since he came back, that he still wants to marry you?"

"Has he perhaps hinted the contrary to you?" replied Emma, pertly.

"Not exactly, but it is not much better that he has said *nothing* about it. What think you—if some one else wanted you, would you be willing to let Angern go?"

"I shall conform to your wishes in every thing, grandpapa," said Emma, while her face grew scarlet.

"Fudge! that's what all the girls say,—and in the end you'll be sure to have your own way, after all. What do you think of Waldeck, ducky, eh?"

"He certainly shall not gain his point *quite* so easily," thought Emma, and continued aloud, "But the lawsuit?"

"Yes, that *is* a confounded affair! It uses up quantities of money, and is terribly vexatious. Really, Emmy, the law-

yers said the compromise was the wisest step that we could take, for your cause could not have been kept up much longer."

"And so now you want to give up an inheritance, which is half the fortune of your poor Emma?"

"Who says so? Can't we propose a division of the property? I'll tell you what, Emmy, you are pretty avaricious for a girl of your age! Other such young things leave those matters to their parents or guardians."

Emma burst into tears: "How you wrong me! oh heavens, how far you mistake me! And I must hear this from you, just for two men, for neither of whom I care a straw!"

"Well, well," said the colonel, who, like all selfish men, could not see tears without getting provoked; "they are both not to be despised, Emmy! But, you know, I shall let you have your own way. Don't take either, if you don't like them. You've got money enough to get along alone! An old maid don't want much to live on."

The colonel had touched Emma's weakest spot. The mere words "old maid" applied to herself, roused her indignation: "What good would it do, if I were to say that I preferred Waldeck? You would only call me avaricious."

"It would not be a bad choice, at all," replied the colonel.

"But Angern," objected Emma, "will he agree to all this so readily?"

"If he cared any thing for you, would he not have spoken long ago? *He* knows that our fine estates will not escape him, whatever may happen."

The idea that her grandparents, and with them the world, might believe that Angern rejected her, was insupportable to Emma. "And how do you know," she asked, with irritation, "but what Angern is only silent because he thinks my heart belongs to another?"

"Aha!" cried the old gentleman, "is that it? Yes, yes, things look as if Waldeck was pretty sure of success. He's

not the fellow to court a girl that's known to be engaged, if you had not given him notice that you would like to shift."

"There you and he are very likely to find yourselves mistaken," said Emma, angrily. "You can just tell him that I don't like him—or—" she added, hesitatingly, "that I ask some time to consider about it."

On the following morning, Felix received a letter from the colonel, in which he thanked him for the honorable distinction, and with regard to the answer, requested a short time for consideration.

Felix, not suspecting that this had been Emma's answer, was not surprised by it, for he knew very well that no step could be taken in the matter without an agreement with Angern. The latter, however, to whom he communicated the letter, saw the necessity of settling the affair immediately, so that the claims laid upon him might not be doubled in strength, by the rejection of the new suitor.

He, therefore, on the evening of the same day, went to Colonel Willingen's house, and late enough to find the old people immovably fixed at their whist-table. Emma, who was making tea in the other room, received him with the most charming cordiality. He sat down by her. There was an expression of timid sadness in her face, which perplexed Angern, and which he tried to account for by her fear that he might insist upon his claims. He generously resolved to speak frankly with her as soon as the servant had left the room. But it seemed as if tea would never be over; the cups had just been brought back for the third time. Thus he had time to observe Emma closely. He had long admired the grace and elegance with which she fulfilled this domestic duty; conversation, while she was thus employed, could only be carried on in commonplace words and expressions, but just these, as well as looks and miens, conveyed many an arrow from the little coquette to him. "You cannot think, my dear cousin," she

sighed, "how tired I am of living so much in society! Now that spring is coming again, I long so for the country!"—and then again: "How tiresome you must find our everlasting sameness here, after your travels; how shallow our eternal tea-drinkings must seem to you! I wish you had taken me with you as your page to the Andes or the Himmelaya mountains! Don't you think little Emma would have made quite a pretty page? How did I look at that time? (and, with the sweetest of smiles,) as ugly as now?"—Then she asked him about some books of importance, of which she had heard him speak; "How ignorant I am!" she cried; "how often have I felt so bitterly that I am an orphan! If I had not lost my mother so early, she would have directed my steps, and taught me to make the best of my time. My youth stands so much in need of a guide!" She turned away, and seemed to brush away a tear.

Angern was confused. "What is she aiming at?" he asked himself. And really, he might ask that—only that Emma herself did not in fact know what she meant. Her anger at Felix had softened over night. She felt very well that she could not make a match which promised her more of what she called happiness. But Angern must positively learn to recognize the power of her charms. Her grandfather mistook her, in thinking her too avaricious for her age. The idea did come into her head that Angern, if he were in love with her, and obliged to give her up, would doubtless be much less willing to make a sacrifice with regard to their mutual inheritance, than if he himself wished to break the tie; but this voice was entirely silenced by the much louder one of her offended vanity.

At length the tea-things were removed. Before Angern had found a suitable introduction to his intended explanation, Emma had already taken up her guitar, in order to charm him with the truly Spanish expression which Collado had

taught her to put into "*Mia madre, amores tengo!*" Angern half listened, while his mind ran on other things. The Southern fire displeased him in a German girl. When she had finished, he took the guitar from her hands without much ado, and, seating himself by her side, while she looked at him hesitatingly, said:

"You sing beautifully, my dear Emma; this precious talent alone is enough to delight a man and to make his life pleasant. But for the present allow me to improve these rare moments of our being alone, in coming to an understanding with you. You know, probably, my dear cousin, what we old people agreed upon with regard to you, when you were a child of not yet fourteen?"

"And what if I knew it?" asked Emma, with a most fascinating smile.

"Then you would know," replied Angern, perfectly calm, as if he were speaking of the most indifferent things, but without looking at her, "that we were very foolish. The affair can be arranged differently. It is plain that I am too old for you. I ought to have staid here at least, to gain your affections. But it was very imprudent in us to hope that you would fix them upon an absent person. I can therefore only approve of your having favored the advances of another worthy young man, whom nature seems to have made for you."

"Who told you," whispered Emma, confounded with surprise, and hardly able to control her voice, "that I have favored them?"

"Certainly not your conduct in society," replied Angern; and added, well versed as he was in the mysteries of the human heart, "but, on the one hand, the coldness with which you have shown me nothing but friendship since my return; and on the other, the fact that Waldeck would not have asked the hand of an affianced bride in marriage, and much

less would have expressed his wishes to the intended himself, unless he had had some hope of being accepted."

The perfect composure and plainness with which Angern spoke, convinced Emma that for the present she had nothing to hope from this quarter; and the delicacy with which he professed to have seen only friendship in her behavior, assisted her much in hiding her inward emotion. She soon regained her composure, and said, "Your frankness, my dear cousin, makes it my duty also, to be perfectly plain with you. It seems to me, indeed, as if I were not exactly suited to you; and if you know some other way of settling our contract, I should prefer it."

"Leave it all to me," said Angern, very much relieved; "and allow me to offer you my congratulations for your marriage with our friend Waldeck."

Emma did not answer. But when, the next morning, Baron Angern was announced to the colonel, and the latter, before he went to receive his guest, asked her once more which of the two she really liked best, adding, "Waldeck has the most money," she said, "I don't like Angern. If you have no objection, you can accept Waldeck for me."

Angern's generosity, his uncommon knowledge of business, and the perfect simplicity with which he treated the most entangled affairs, soon put every thing right. The inheritance which we have so often mentioned, consisted mostly of landed property, which was advantageously let out. As the first lawsuit had lasted three years, and it had been agreed upon in the compromise, to leave the income from these leases untouched till Emma should be of age, it had grown in these ten years into so considerable a capital as to nearly equal the worth of the real estate. Angern proposed that he should take the latter, and leave the other to Emma, while at the same time he declared himself willing to make up the balance.

Colonel Willingen found it difficult to conceal his satis-

faction, for the warnings of his lawyer gave him very little hope from the renewal of the lawsuit. He said to himself, "I certainly should have thought Angern was wiser than this," but still pretended as if he only allowed the affair to take this turn from love of peace; and Angern took no pains to show him that he understood him.

The following morning Felix received Emma's formal acceptance, and was betrothed to her in the presence of her grandparents.

Felix had now arrived at the point towards which he had struggled on for the last eight months with the most indefatigable zeal: the charming Emma was, before God and man, his affianced bride; and yet he was still far from being happy. The turn which matters had taken, so humiliating for her insatiable vanity, had put Emma in the worst humor.

She received him much more coldly than, as an accepted suitor, he had reason to expect, and when the grandparents, retiring, left her without constraint, she could not suppress some bitter words at his having, contrary to his promise, taken so important a step without consulting her.

Felix, accustomed to her caprices, tried to kiss the reproaches from her lips, and soon made her more amiable by his delight at having her all to himself now, but the thorn still remained in his heart, and when, an hour after, he was on his way to his sister, feverishly excited, without being cheerful, no one could have recognized in him a happy lover.

He found Heloise looking over her papers. Her soul was with him. The recollection of their happy childhood, of which she had many a written remembrance—his letters from the University, which she had just been reading over again—all these had agitated and affected her deeply. She looked like a saint, when he entered the room, and, with her lap full of papers, she stretched out her hand to him with a gentle smile.

After a few introductory sentences, during which Heloise

rearranged her papers and placed them in her writing-desk, he informed her that he had, a few days ago, proposed for Emma to her grandfather, that Angern had withdrawn his claim, and that he had just been betrothed to her by Colonel Willingen, her guardian.

Heloise had risen from her seat. The blood rushed to her heart as he spoke; she looked strangely pale and angelic. "Well then," she said when he paused, and, clasping her hands, lifted them solemnly towards heaven: "Gracious Father in heaven, bless him! bless him and his Emma!" She felt that her strength was leaving her, and grasped at a chair, but before she could reach it, Felix, astonished and alarmed to the utmost, caught the fainting girl in his arms. Lisette came flying in, and with loud lamentations joined Felix in his efforts to restore Heloise to consciousness, in which they succeeded after a few minutes.

"Now you see, dearest Miss Heloise," cried the maid, as soon as her young mistress opened her eyes, "this comes from getting your feet wet again! oh, Mr. Felix, my young lady won't listen to me at all. She never will go to parties when it rains—she always makes the weather an excuse then,—but when she wants to go and see the poor folks, the weather is never too bad. And so this morning she has been over at the other end of the town again, to look after some sick children!"

Heloise gratefully seized upon the pretext which Lisette unconsciously offered; "It is true," she said, "I have caught cold, dear Felix, I ought to have been more careful. Once again, God bless you!"

Felix, in anxious concern, pressed her soft white hand to his lips a thousand times, and did not leave her until he had seen the color return to her cheeks. "What a strange accident!" he said to himself. "Wet feet may have been the original cause, but there is no doubt that it was the news of my engagement with Emma, that agitated her so much.

What a deeply rooted prejudice! She does not love Emma! She fears for my happiness by her side. Good, beloved girl! Oh, she must, she will be Emma's friend, when she is her sister. Her influence will improve her. Emma is good, and affectionate. The world has spoilt her. Oh, Heloise, your example will make her too love domestic life. How beautiful she looked as she stood before me, so pale and yet so glorious! And what a blooming rose was she once! What can be the matter with her? The city air seems not to agree with her. She ought to go back to the country—only not now—how could I spare her now?"

In this agitated and troubled state of mind he came to his ambassador, whom he thought it his duty to acquaint with his betrothal. "I wish you much joy," said the latter, "Miss von Willingen is a charming girl, and sings exquisitely. I hear your sister is also engaged."

Felix started: "My sister? not that I know of!"

"No? Oh, well then! The world is fond of gossip. My wife told me the other day that she was going to be married to Baron Angern. An excellent man, but a demagogue."

Felix dropped the subject, but an indescribable uneasiness remained in his mind. Heloise engaged! He could give her up to no one! And Angern?—he was too old! And yet—was it perhaps for this that the latter was so willing to draw back? Should Heloise, this good, pure being, tread the path of life alone, while he had formed another tie? But no one was worthy of her. He knew no man who was deserving of so perfect a woman. However—Angern was a man of honor—he would watch him, would watch them both.

But Emma left poor Felix little time to observe others. Even now she succeeded, by means of alternate caprices—one day lavishing upon him a profusion of love and tenderness, and the next, passing several hours in a pouting fit for offences of which he was unconscious—in keeping him in a

continual fever. But particularly from his sister she succeeded in alienating him more and more. For the smallest attention shown to Heloise, he was sure to have to pay by a temporal estrangement on Emma's side, and such reproaches as: "He did not love her; she sacrificed every thing for him, but he loved all his relations better than he did her." And so, as Heloise also did not seek his company, and plainly avoided Emma, it was very natural that the brother and sister saw very little of each other.

The little tea-circle at Isabella's was still in existence. But Heloise, who had found in it her best consolation, began to feel that even this threatened to bring her trouble. Angern's preference showed itself more and more openly. With the most generous confidence, he communicated to his two friends his plans of life; office-holding was disagreeable to him; in the landed proprietor, in the agriculturist, he saw the true freeman, the support of the state. He intended to retire to his newly-acquired estates, there to do, on a small scale, for his tenants, what he so longed to do on a large one for his whole nation; their education, their freedom, their happiness, should be the aim of his life. He expressed the wish to find a partner, who would share his views and his influence. Many a glance told Heloise in whom he hoped to have this wish realized. And could she wish for herself a happier lot? How often had she lamented that the existence of most of her sex is such a blank, their aim but their own happiness, the range of their thoughts never higher than their own family-circle, and in this even, only turning upon the satisfaction of physical desires. And if the wife and mother, in the midst of a numerous family, who, by her care, are all neatly and carefully clad, healthily fed, and punctually sent to school, is already to be honored, how much more enviable is the woman who can exert a like influence over the extended circle of whole villages, and throw into the well-prepared soil the seed of a new and improved generation?

And to have for a stay, for a coöperator, a man like Angern, so well calculated, in all the different relations of life, to be an example and a guide for a high-souled woman! With a pleasing personal appearance, agreeable manners, an even temperament, and generous sentiments, nothing was wanting in him to make the most superior woman happy.

All this Heloise felt—all this she told herself again and again, and yet, with an incomprehensible obstinacy, her heart still held fast the image of the one man, who was not to be hers. She could not deceive herself so far as not to see that Angern, in point of intellect, stood far above Felix—but *him* she loved, only to *him* could she be a wife. The most conflicting feelings coursed through her heart. What should she do, to escape from this struggle? She would go back to the country, to solitude, to her youthful pleasures. But could she leave town before Felix's marriage, without making her conduct very conspicuous, and highly offending him? She would go to her father, would throw herself upon the only heart that was still hers. But he had not answered her letter—she had not heard from him since her foster-mother's death. Should she wander about in strange countries, like an adventurer, in search of him? What should she do? Stay in town, and await the day which would give the final blow to her heart?

And this day, Emma's wedding-day, was fixed on the last of May. A handsome suite of apartments was ready for the reception of the young couple. Meanwhile, however, the end of April had drawn near, when Felix went home for a short time, to settle, before his marriage, the affairs of his estate. He was expected back in three days. Heloise's thoughts had gone with him to her beloved home. She felt almost relieved when he was there, and was looking forward to his return with trembling, when, suddenly, an expedient presented itself.

Soon after her arrival in the capital, Heloise had become acquainted with the family of President von Groenau, and had been much attracted by the cordiality of their domestic circle, and the strong family-ties which bound the different members together. Five or six sons and daughters, all blessed with a numerous progeny, were happily married in the capital, and it was a heart-cheering sight, when (as was the case twice a week, on appointed days,) those fine-looking men and blooming women, with a host of lovely grandchildren of all ages, were gathered around the venerable, but hale and hearty parents. Only the youngest, a daughter, born ten years after her last predecessor, and therefore the pet of the whole family, lived with her parents, although she too was married, and mother of two charming children. Some four or five years ago, a Livonian nobleman, who was connected with the Russian embassy, had offered himself to her, and had not been refused. But as the parents did not wish to part from the only daughter that was left to them, Baron Rosen remained with her in her father's house, without thus missing the convenience of a household of his own; for the president was rich, and his wife, wise and discreet, procured every thing that could make a young couple happy. But hardly had the second year of their marriage passed, when Rosen was called home by an imperial dispatch, which gave him to understand that he was to receive an appointment in one of the inland provinces. He had always, since he held a civil office, been employed at the German legations, and had therefore considered such a summons very improbable, but his young wife had never even thought of the possibility of it. She was distracted—she declared that she could not live away from her family, from her mother. Rosen, at a loss what to do, especially as his wife was in a situation which soon would make her mother's care more necessary to her than ever, at length resolved to go alone. He hoped, besides,

when once there, to be able to bring about a revocation, or at least his appointment to the legation of some other German court. But two years had since passed, and no such prospect had been held out to him. Since the beginning of the second, he had repeatedly urged his wife to join him, but in vain. Theodora was good, and loved her husband; but, without character, and entirely helpless without her mother, she really believed she could not live without her. The parents knew how their favorite would suffer among strangers. They did not urge her to stay, for they felt that it was her duty to go, but they found a thousand excuses for her remaining. At one time Theodora's delicate constitution could not bear the summer heat of St. Petersburg; at another, winter was so near that it was better to wait till spring. Now, one of the children was sick, and then the president's birth-day came in the way, and it seemed too hard that she should not join in the celebration of this festal day—alas! perhaps the last—on which the whole family would assemble with flowers and songs! In short, the second winter had gone, and Theodora still found the separation as impossible as two years before.

In this cheerful, affectionate family-circle, Heloise had passed many an hour of true enjoyment. She had been pronounced a particular favorite of the old lady, which was, in itself, a sufficient reason for her to be treated with marked attention by the whole family. But what gave them, secretly, an additional interest in Heloise's eyes, was just that circumstance which they looked upon as a decided misfortune—their connection with Russia. For Rosen had formerly, during his military life, been very intimate with her father; his mother-in-law recollected distinctly having heard him speak of Count Staden—she could repeat several anecdotes from the Persian war, and although this acquaintance dated back to days long gone by, for Rosen had spent ten years in Ger-

many, yet it gave her the only opportunity which she had, to hear her father, or her uncle, as she called him, spoken of, and spoken of with interest.

From this family Heloise one day received a message, urging her to come to them. She went immediately. With surprise she saw several trunks standing in the hall. She was shown to the Baroness Rosen's room. Here too, half-packed trunks met her eye, every thing was lying about in confusion, some of Theodora's sisters were occupied in folding dresses and pinning up bundles. Theodora herself lay on the sofa, bathed in tears, with her head on her mother's lap, while the latter was soothing and comforting her. A letter from Rosen had been received that morning, in which he urged and insisted on Theodora's joining him. He had also written to the president, and asked, with some bitterness, whether it was right to deprive him of his wife, of his children. He had been appointed governor of one of the eastern provinces, was obliged to go there towards the middle of May, and entreated his wife, if she had the least love for him, to take immediate advantage of the sleighing in the Baltic provinces for her journey, in order to find him still in St. Petersburg. If she were to lose this opportunity, she would have to wait several months for the commencement of steam-navigation, and then travel through the interior of Russia alone. The letter was written with the greatest tenderness, and yet with the authority of a husband. Theodora was dissolved in tears, for her parents had decided that she ought to go.

Heloise, in spite of the sincere interest which she felt, could hardly suppress a smile when she had heard all, for her first thought, when she saw such universal grief, had been that Rosen was dying, and that his wife was preparing to bid him a last farewell. She felt that even domestic affection can be carried to excess in undisciplined minds.

Theodora wept and sobbed. "Man and woman shall leave father and mother, and cleave unto each other," said the mother, in broken accents. The sisters, frequently interrupted in their occupations by their tears, every now and then took up Theodora's little boy, who was running about among the trunks, or the youngest from the nurse's arms, to cover them with tears and caresses. "Poor, dear children!" said one aunt, with a sigh.

"Oh no, no," cried Heloise, "happy children you, who are going to your father! Oh! a father's arms are the safest resting-place! I wish that I, like you, could go to my father—to my uncle, I mean, who supplies a father's place to me!"

Theodora started up: "And why cannot you?" she cried. "Make this journey with me, come with me to your uncle!"

Her mother and sisters eagerly seized the idea; "Heloise!" they cried, "you are free, you are independent! Be Theodora's support, go with her!"

The idea struck Heloise like lightning. "Go to my father!" she thought, and trembled inwardly; "Not pass *that* day, the marriage-day, here! Not be obliged to see him stand at the altar with another!"

All were pressing her. The mother looked at her with an expression of tenderness and trust, and said: "Heloise, it would be a real comfort to me if I could know that this child—for she is but a child, with her inexperience and helplessness—was making this dreaded journey by your side, leaning on you!"

"But I do not know where my uncle is. Perhaps on the Turkish frontier. How should I find him?"

"Rosen will settle that!" replied the eldest sister; "perhaps you will find him in St. Petersburgh; and if not, one can travel quickly in Russia. At any rate, you can hear something of him there."

"Rosen will see about it all. He will let your uncle know

that you are in the country; perhaps he is stationed near Rosen's government," said another.

"Ah, Heloise!" sighed the mother, "if you would but do it!"

"Ah, Heloise!" cried Theodora, "do not turn me out into the world all alone. What is to become of my children? How can I take care of them, when my head is so confused, my heart so crushed?"

Heloise looked pityingly at the little ones. "Well, then," she cried, "I will go with you. And not only," she added, somewhat ashamed, when all were overwhelming her with thanks, "to do you a service, my poor Theodora; I go besides, to seek my uncle. I also need a support in this world."

Heloise's decision had effected a wonderful change in Theodora's present mood. The horses were ordered for the next morning at an early hour, and it was agreed upon that the baroness should be at Madame von Pollwitz's door with the carriage at five o'clock, when Heloise promised to be ready.

Our heroine hurried home. It was three o'clock, about the dinner hour; how should she inform her kind hostess of her wild scheme? "What will she, what will Isabella think of my going away now, during Felix's absence? And he? Oh! hence—only away from here—I will not, I cannot see him again, before I can tell him frankly: Felix, I am not your sister, but I have a sister's heart for you!"

She was much relieved to find, on arriving at home, that Madame von Pollwitz had gone to dine with an old friend who lived out of town, and would not be back before nine or ten o'clock at night. "Thus Isabella will not learn any thing of my plan, either," thought Heloise; "I have often found it hard enough to meet her penetrating eye with composure. Perhaps she would have informed Angern of it, and my sudden decision would have led him to a declaration which I am *so* glad to avoid."

Another difficult thing was to tell Lisette of her inten-

tions; particularly as the size of Theodora's carriage would not admit of her taking the poor girl, her friend from her childhood, with her. Lisette could hardly be comforted, and only the confidence which Heloise placed in her, by giving her the charge of all she left behind, consoled her in a measure. A trunk of moderate size was soon filled with the most necessary things. Every thing else Lisette was to pack up carefully, and, after Felix's return, take it to Waldeck, where Heloise, after consulting with her, promised to provide for her maintenance. She then gave the weeping girl many a commission with regard to her mother's grave, and all her favorite spots, and a thousand messages for her beloved, venerable friend, the excellent pastor. Lastly, she sent Lisette to a banker with whom she was acquainted, to get a few hundred dollars—which, moderate in her expenses as she had been, she had easily saved from her pin-money—exchanged for Russian coin.

When she was left alone, she seated herself before her writing-desk, and wrote Isabella a letter, in which she begged a thousand pardons for her sudden departure without bidding her farewell, and at last disclosed her relation to Felix. She felt that she owed this to Isabella—if she had but done it at first, how differently would all things have turned out! She used few words—gave expression to none of her inmost feelings; she knew that Isabella would comprehend them but too easily. "I am going now to my father," she wrote; "he has loved and suffered—he will not repulse his child. Heaven bless you, Isabella, you white rose—did not Angern once call you so?—and all the lovely buds on the mother-stem! All the happiness that I have felt since my mother's death, I owe to you, my Isabella, and to Angern! Oh! happy will be the woman who, guided by him, can learn the way to the noblest, the true aim of life. But he deserves an *undivided* heart. A heart cannot suffice him,

which, by all the fibres of its existence, is interwoven with a third. Oh! preserve your friendship for me, beloved ones—you have both strong hearts—do not be angry, do not despise me, for my cowardly flight!"

Then, with a thousand tears, she wrote the following letter to Felix:—

My beloved Felix—I know you will be alarmed when you hear that I am gone—and I myself am alarmed at the thought of leaving you, the oldest friend of my life, so without farewell, and perhaps for ever. For a strange, desolate land lies before me, dark like my future. But I cannot await your return. The Groenaus urge me to accompany the Baroness Rosen to Russia, and I take this opportunity to go in search of my uncle—*my father!*

Yes, my beloved brother!—for I know you will still remain my *brother*, when I tell you that I am not your own sister, but that Count Staden is my father, that the Princess Antonia was my mother. Forgive me for withholding these last lines of a beloved hand, which I inclose, from you for so long. You had already decided differently, dearest brother. If you had learnt your mother's last wish before, it would only have made you unhappy, without your having been able to fulfil it; for man is not master over his own heart. And besides, our beloved mother would never have formed this wish, had she been aware that you had already chosen. Do not blame me, therefore, for not having spoken before. And do not be angry that I go away; you have found a heart—my father, too, must need one. Perhaps he will not reject that of his poor Heloise! God bless you, Felix! Think sometimes of Waldeck; think of the years of our childhood, Felix, and do not forget your orphan sister

"Heloise."

She had written the letter over three times already—her overflowing heart had each time betrayed itself. At last it seemed cold enough. In a postscript she begged him to give Lisette the post of a teacher of needle-work in her dear school in Waldeck, and to take charge of the farther support of the faithful girl.

At ten o'clock, Madame von Pollwitz at last returned. Heloise dreaded the meeting. How ungrateful was she towards her mother's early friend, for the hospitality which she had so long shown her! And she had always been accustomed to honor the advice of old age. She went to meet her hostess; and the latter had hardly laid off her hat and cloak, and was kindly making many excuses, for having run away from her without letting her know any thing about it, when Heloise interrupted her, by saying, while she embraced her, and laid her head on her shoulder: "I have to ask your forgiveness for a much greater offence, my dear motherly friend. What will you think of me when I bid you good-by this evening, and leave you early to-morrow morning?"

The old lady hardly believed her ears. Heloise's caresses diminished her displeasure. For her the pressing requests of the Groenau family had to account for this sudden decision.

"But your brother?" she inquired.

"He does not need me for the present," replied Heloise, with averted face.

"But how will you come back?"—in short, the good lady had so much to object, so many questions to ask, and did this with such maternal solicitude—for she had become very much attached to Heloise during the six months that she had been with her—that the poor girl, in tears, at length referred her to her letter to Isabella, well knowing that her friend would honor her delicacy. At length they took a tender farewell.

Heloise had to promise that she would come to her old

friend's bed once more in the morning. But when, after a tearful, sleepless night, the next morning, while the carriage was waiting for her, she entered the bedroom of her hostess, she found her in a sound, refreshing morning slumber. She approached the bed; the venerable face, with the pale, sunken cheeks, and the deep, old-fashioned cap, reminded her so painfully of her departed foster-mother. Her heart was ready to break. She imprinted one kiss on the hand of her sleeping friend, and then threw herself into the travelling-carriage which was to bear her into the wide, dreary world.

CHAPTER XI.

THE JOURNEY.

Our heroine could certainly not expect much pleasure from a winter-journey with a spoilt young creature who was for ever sighing for her mother's lap, and nearly as helpless as the two children, who soon accustomed themselves to depend more on Heloise than on mamma. Neither Theodora nor the nurse had ever before been at any distance from the capital. The lady found the food at the inns hardly eatable, the beds horrid; handkerchiefs were pinned over every pillow, and every article touched with finger-ends. The nurse imitated her lady in all things; for she found Theodora's discontentedness much more genteel than Heloise's endeavors to look at every thing in the best light.

The latter, heavy as was her heart, tried to divert Theodora, and to waken in her a sense not only of what she owed to her husband, who had always showed her the greatest kindness, but also of what she owed to herself; but her success was small. She was more fortunate, however, in acquiring a decided influence over the boy. Hitherto, by the unreasonableness of his mother, who was not too tender, but too weak to administer punishment herself, the child had looked upon his absent father in the light of a bugbear. But now he was told about poor papa, who had so long wanted to see his Fritz. Instead of hearing, as before, whenever he was naughty, "Just wait till father comes—he'll punish you for it hard

enough!" the hope was now, for the first time, held out to him, of soon riding on papa's knee, and he was urged to be very good, so as to make dear papa, who longed for him so, and who had prayed for him so often, very happy. Now and then, to be sure, Theodora would put in a bitter word, such as: "If his love for his children were really disinterested, he might have let them stay with their grandparents, where they were better off than any where else!" Her husband seemed to her a savage, since he had separated her from her family.

The journey was of great advantage to Heloise, in subjecting her to cares which were entirely new to her, and therefore diverted her mind. For, after the first attempt to keep the accounts herself, which had for consequence the loss of a considerable sum of money, Theodora put all the funds into Heloise's hands, because, as she said, her heart was too much crushed to enable her to think of such matters—and Heloise therefore, with the help of a faithful servant, arranged all the affairs of the journey. She fixed the time for starting, ordered the horses, hurried Theodora, waked the children, and assisted in dressing them. Consequently she felt not a little relieved when they at length beheld the imperial city stretched out before them. Theodora's heart, by degrees, as she approached nearer and nearer to her long-absent husband, had softened towards him a little. She longed for a new support. "Now we'll soon be with father," she and the nurse said to the children. "And I too?" thought Heloise with a sigh.

During the journey she had had time to think over the strangeness of her plan. Could not her father be in a part of the country where she would not be able to reach him? The last time that she had heard about him, he was in Grusinia, but expecting soon to be called away again. She could not endure the idea of having to remain with Baroness Rosen. And what if her father did not approve of her coming? If

he was to blame her for coming to him without waiting for his permission?

Rosen's happiness when he embraced his wife and children—one of the latter, the little delicate creature which had come into the world only after his departure, completely reconciled Theodora's tender heart to her fate, for the present. From a letter of the president's, which had anticipated the travellers, Rosen knew already that Heloise was of the party. But he was not a little astonished when she informed him of her intention to go to her uncle, Count Staden.

"You have romantic ideas, my dear young lady," said the baron, with a compassionate smile. "Count Staden is stationed near the Caucasus."

"Is that inaccessible to me?" inquired Heloise.

"I doubt whether it is just the place for delicate young ladies. You would find but poor accommodations in your uncle's camp."

"I am satisfied with little."

"Even with a suttler's tent?"

"Why not, if my uncle takes up with that of a soldier?"

"Will you not perhaps put on page's attire, and enlist, my fair young lady?"

Thus the practical man laughed at what he took for a romantic caprice. Such enthusiasm seemed too singular in a *niece*. He thought that there must be a lover in the case. But he probed here and there, and could not discover any thing where there was in fact nothing to discover. Heloise could not induce him to make inquiries about an opportunity for her to go to the Caucasus. "It would be against my conscience," he said, "to assist you in such a piece of folly."

Heloise, deeply hurt, begged him, upon this, at least to make her acquainted with the ambassador of her sovereign, so that she might apply to him. Rosen started for the ambassador's immediately.

When he returned the expression of his countenance was entirely changed: "Would you like to hear something new from your country?" he inquired. Dispatches have been received to-day: — your prince is dead. From what the ambassador has just disclosed to me, that makes some difference in your affair. He will call on you to-morrow."

Heloise's eyes fell. The ambassador had always been the confidant of the prince royal. He, as indeed not a few in Heloise's country, had long been in the secret. She could not feel any love for a grandfather who had disowned her, and recognized with gratitude the happy turn which her destiny had taken. She hoped that what was looked upon as an extravagancy in the *niece*, would, in the *daughter*, be allowed as an act of filial affection.

When the ambassador called on her the next morning, the affair was openly spoken of. He was too well acquainted with the views of his new sovereign, to find farther secrecy necessary. He too, at first, attempted to dissuade her from making the journey, at least until she had heard from her father, and offered, as the Rosens were obliged to leave in a few days, and he himself had no family, to procure accommodations for her at a friend's house meanwhile. Heloise consented, though reluctantly, and concluded to write to her father immediately. But as the mail to that part of the country went only twice a week, three days must yet elapse before she could send her letter, and at least four sad weeks before she could hope for an answer.

The first of these delays was of advantage to her, for on the second morning Rosen came home with pleasant news. "Perseverance brings success, fair countess! For, besides a daughter, a mother too has been found, who wants to go among the Circassians. Princess Gawriloff, a lady from the provinces, has been here for some time to obtain information with regard to her son, who is fighting under your father

against the wild hordes of the Caucasus. She has now at last found out that he is wounded, and wants to go there to take care of him. She is a bore and a fool, but good enough to lend you her wing on the journey. She is very willing to give the daughter of the great general a seat in her travelling-carriage, and one of her maids to wait upon her. Well, you really look as if you were glad to get away from us, countess! Can you be ready by to-morrow morning?"

"At any moment, when I am going to my father," replied Heloise, joyfully.

And the next morning she was really seated in the travelling-carriage, and her poor heart, which of late had threatened to burst with excitement and suspense, began to beat more calmly. Was she not now going directly towards her aim, which, the nearer she approached to it, seemed to lose more and more of its wildness. So far her breast had been filled but with the *one* feeling of wounded, disappointed love, and the fervent wish of freeing herself from inward humiliation; but now a gentle joy entered her heart, healing and soothing it, as she drew near the fulfilment of her long-cherished wish, to rest in the arms of her father, of her beloved, banished father, whom she had never yet seen!

It was beneficial to her that this thought took, as it were, possession of her soul, for her present situation did not promise the poor child much enjoyment. The prospect of passing at least twelve or thirteen days and nights with two elderly women, who were strangers to her, with whom she could not speak a word, and neither of whom could understand what she said—confined in a close travelling-coach, with green silk curtains let down before the windows, on account of the poor mother's weak eyes—was certainly not a consoling one. By Heloise's side sat the princess; a gaunt, stooping figure, with a yellow, dried up face, with features, sharp, yet without character, a sunken mouth with a few

teeth, totally ruined by the national habit of painting, with eyes that were thickly swollen and had lost their brilliancy from incessant weeping; hardly above middle age, but, from a long life in the country, in the midst of inferiors, who were dependent on her slightest wish, long since out of the habit of paying any attention to her looks and manners; her outward appearance much more like a peevish old crone from the lower classes than like a noble lady of some fifty years. But in disposition the princess belonged entirely to her rank, for hers was one of those narrow souls, which, possessed from childhood of the most undisturbed selfishness, using every thing around them as a tool, never have the most distant idea that they too are only one of the millions of wheels in the vast machinery which directs the course of the whole world. She had never thought of the possibility—not even when for a passing moment in church sometimes, the "Lord have mercy" of the choristers, crying to heaven, penetrated her nerves—that she was created for any other object than to dress herself, take her meals, make visits, and play cards; a species of woman which, with such hardened selfishness, is hardly to be found any where but in the higher classes.

She had grown up on the estates of her noble parents, in the government of Kostroma, surrounded by serfs, four of which, two waiting-maids and two playmates, her mother made her a present of when she was five years old, with the permission to do with them whatever she liked, and the strict injunction to the four girls not by any means to irritate the little Highness, who was very weak and delicate, by contradiction; as anger was injurious to her health. The girls thought, "It will be easy enough to get along with a child, if we only keep it in good humor by flattery, and caresses, and good things stolen from the cook." They consequently used every means to accomplish this end, without thereby escaping the experience that the little hands of the countess, as she grew

up, could not only distribute boxes on the ear, and her delicate little feet bestow kicks, just as well as the more powerful ones of her lady mother, but that she was, besides, a proficient in scratching, pinching, and biting. Children are the most cruel tyrants of all.

The Princess Gawriloff had, however, been married as young as any Russian Miss; although, in consequence of the torturing *ennui* in which she grew up, not as young, by far, as she would have wished. For had she not, since her eleventh year, on every Sylvester night, melted lead,* in company with her confidential maids, and, a few minutes before midnight, placed herself, in expectation, between two mirrors, in order to see, in the one before her, when the last strokes of the bell were proclaiming the parting of the old year, the features of her future husband shining out from the glass to which her back was turned? And had not wise women, in the presence of her mother, laid cards for her to find out her future fate? Had not her nurse, from her earliest childhood, taken her every year, in the Christmas holidays, into the large "black room,"† where all the maids of the house were seated around the covered dish, singing "platter ditties,"‡ and put her pawns in with theirs? And how anxiously did she not watch, when the prophetic song had been about "a wedding," or "a happy marriage," or "a noble husband," to see whether the decisive grasp would not bring out one of her pawns!

When she was fifteen, the age when her parents also

* To judge from the forms which the melted lead takes when poured into water, what her fortune would be.

† "*The black room*" is the name for the servants' room in Russia.

‡ Another mode of telling fortunes. Each puts one or more articles into the covered dish, and after every "*Pobljudnaja pjessna*" or "platter ditty," an appointed person pulls a pawn from under the cover. The subject of the song immediately preceding tells the owner her fortune.

thought it desirable for her to marry, her father took her to the capital of the province, where the noblemen of the neighborhood were wont to assemble to sell the produce of their flocks, and, besides this, those who had daughters, to look for suitors, and those who were single, for wives. Katharina Michailowna appeared here for the first time in public, painted, as usual, red, but to-day, on her introduction into the circle of ladies, also white, at the grand ball which the lady of the governor gave for the assembled nobility. Prince Gawriloff, after having spent his whole fortune during a few years of dissipation and extravagance as captain of the Semenoff Guards, and saved nothing but a small estate with 500 souls,* had just returned home to mend his faithless fortune by an advantageous match. The brilliant green uniform, the blue collar with silver embroidery and border, his breast adorned with the Wladimir-cross and the fourth class order of St. Anne, his wasp-like, tightly-laced waist—all this was enough to delight the fair Kostromians.

Katharina Michailowna was the richest of all that were being exhibited on this occasion, and therefore the most fortunate. A dowry of 2000 souls, with a reversion of 20,000, was certainly not to be despised.

The count was easily persuaded; the only thing which did not please the parents, was that the prince intended to leave the army, so that their daughter would never be any thing but a captain's wife; for the Russians from the interior think much less of a nobility of many centuries' standing, than of the official rank which the emperor bestows. The prince, however, whose views had been somewhat Europeanized in St. Petersburg, insisted upon being nothing but a free country-nobleman. In a few months 1500 of the 2000 souls of his wife's dowry

* The usual mode of valuing property in Russia is by the number of souls, which means the *male* serfs.

had been lost at play to the neighboring noblemen. Now came a hard time. The count could not be induced to give more during his lifetime—the strictest economy was necessary. The remaining 1000 souls had to work and to pay for the lost 1500. And does not the proverb say, besides: 'a rich peasant is like a horned ox?'* The princess, at her embroidery-frame or laying *patience*, at home, or at the whist-table during the visits to and from the neighboring ladies, did not have much to remind her of the change; she had always horses enough left to take her on her round of visits, enough persons to help her in the annual sewings and preservings, to flatter her, and for her to vent her ill-humor upon.

But the princess was a woman. She had, besides a head whose emptiness she was not aware of, also an empty heart, which she longed to fill. Five young boys she had seen pine away, one after the other, in spite of all the medicine of the German district-physician, (notwithstanding that he had been one of the most skilful barber's apprentices in Goettingen,) and in defiance of all sympathetic cures of the wise women of the village. She had shed many, many tears over them, and adorned the pink coffins of the little darlings with wreaths and mourning-crowns. For she loved these little parts of herself as much as was in her power. They had given her so little trouble! The nurses had suckled them, and washed and dressed them, and sung them to sleep, and, oh, joy! one or the other had already learned to cross himself, and to call *Maminka*.† when he was brought into his mother's room on the arm of his *Njänka*.‡ She thought she had a right to murmur against Providence for having treated her so unjustly; she became morose, and nothing could satisfy her.

But, after a long time, the good God, who has compassion on folly as well as on sin, gave her another child, a strong,

* Russian proverb. † Mamma. ‡ Nurse.

beautiful boy, his parents' pride. He was again called Alexander, after the emperor; a name which already three of his brothers had borne. For their mother had only loved *her children* in them, not the lost *individuals*. She called every new-born boy Alexander again, in the hope of thus being enabled to forget the preceding one in the new one. The boy grew up, worshipped by the whole household. There was no sacrifice that was not made for the little screamer, to pacify him, no vessel so costly but what he might dash it to pieces, no headdress of the maids so carefully arranged but what he might pull it down. When he was three years old, the whole neighborhood talked about the little house-tyrant; and the nurses and waiting-maids, in spite of all the injunctions which they received, to hold their young master in high respect, began to complain now and then, that "Prince Sashinka* deigned to slap rather too hard."

When the boy was eight years old, Prince Gawriloff died, who, in spite of his tenderness, sometimes, in cases where the interests of father and son crossed each other, held the reins rather tight. The sponsors and friends now insisted on having Sasha placed among the cadet-corps at St. Petersburg; and what Russian mother would not have her ambition satisfied, by seeing her darlings, under the emperor's supreme direction, grow up to be his personal servants? But neither the princess, nor Marfa the nurse, could part with Sasha. The district-school and a German tutor, who had come to Russia as valet to a Kasan professor, completed his education. All the boundless selfishness of the princess had, as it were, dissolved in him, who, in a measure, was a continuation of herself—and was transferred from her past to her future, of which the boy was the representative. He let her pursue her course, without paying much attention to it;

* Sashinka, Sasha, Russian diminutives for Alexander.

but if she had withheld this his right from him, he would have been angry enough, for with his mother's selfishness, he united his father's passionate temper.

In his eighteenth year, just when the daring Circassians gave much occasion to be talked about, he suddenly declared that he too would go the Caucasus; that he would be a cavalry officer, and show the rebels, who were so proud of their riding and shooting, that a Russian could ride and shoot as well as they. Vain were the mother's tears, vain those of the faithful nurse, whose shrewd arguments and subtle flattery had many a time kept the wild boy from some piece of folly; for, as the indefatigable assistant and adviser of the princess, she had brought him up and spoiled him with her.

"Stay at home, *Golubushka*,"* she said, caressingly, "'in the sun it is warm, and with his mother a son is well off;'† where can you be more comfortable than at home, where your will, after God's, is obeyed by all? Listen to me, *Dedushka*,‡ to your old nurse! 'The nightingale is small, but her voice is loud!'"§ All in vain! Sasha had long since become not only the pet, but also the tyrant of the two loving women. And in this case he had perhaps chosen the best part.

The nurse was the first to become resigned to unavoidable necessity. "What good does it do?" she said; "have not our wise ancestors already said: 'My son is mine, but the wisdom that he possesses, is his?'"‖—and when the princess saw her darling in his splendid uniform, that was so becoming to him, and friends and neighbors came from more than a hundred *wersts*¶ off, to see him in it, and to admire his excellent riding, she too was reconciled to her loss.

* Little dove.
† Russian proverb.
‡ Little grandfather.
§ Russian proverb.
‖ Russian proverb.
¶ *Werst*, a Russian mile.

As an imperial officer, Sasha had of a sudden become much more genteel than all the country-nobility of the government of Kostroma. Even the district-marshal, who, before this, had hardly concealed his contempt of the young prince Gawriloff, and on some appropriate occasion had even hinted something about a bearded darling boy, grew exceedingly polite all at once, and wished him joy for his honorable career.

Now there was a general sewing and wadding of satin under-jackets, to ward off the treacherous balls—a universal packing of trunks and valises. This afforded some employment. And if now and then a few maternal tears would flow, the good nurse, with her vivid imagination and sympathy, soon managed to dry them. "Be still, be still, *Dushinka*,"* she consoled her; "God be praised, many a one escapes without a scratch, even. And may he not be made a general? May he not get the cross of the order of St. George; or that of St. Wladimir, like Stephen Platonowitsh, who is for ever fingering the ribbon that hangs from his button-hole? And is it so very certain that he will fight in any battles? Can they not just as well use him among the reserve? And is not our lord the emperor, God bless him, going there too, to see if the troops are doing every thing right? And will not our Sasha get acquainted with him then, and is not the happiness of his subjects in his hands? And if the emperor, God be with him, comes there himself, the rebels will soon surrender! And then there'll be peace, and our Sasha will come back with his breast all full of badges of different orders. What do you think, Katharina Michailowna, what will Natalia Kyrillowna say, who has so often talked against the dear fiery young blood? And Proskovia Andrewna, will she not grow green with envy, because her

* Little soul.

Misha has been in service so long, and cannot come to any thing?"

These and other similar consolatory arguments necessarily had the desired effect. And when, before long, the first letter came, announcing the darling's safe arrival in the camp, the whole house was in ecstasies. The princess, in honor of the happy festival, ordered double Sunday-portions of brandy to be distributed among her people. She then seated herself at the window, and the reeling of the drunken men and women, and the blessings which were showered upon her and her son from their lips, made her laugh for the first time since Sasha's departure. But month after month passed, and no second letter arrived. The princess, after some trouble, had succeeded in procuring one of the five copies of the "St. Petersburg Gazette," that went the rounds in the government of Kostroma: there they were given in full, the long pompous reports of glorious victories, gained by the never yet vanquished Russian arms; of the submissiveness of the Abazaks, and the faithful attachment of the Kabardines. But among these there crept in now and then a dark rumor of fallen thousands, of fortifications surrendered, of overfilled hospitals. In vain the faithful nurse laid her prophetic cards morning and evening, seated by the bedside of the princess; there was no luck in them, as she had to confess, shaking her head—the knave of hearts always lay at the bottom, as if he was buried; and the knave of spades, the black rascal! was always on top of him.

And dreams, dreams! What Russian woman could doubt the truth of their oracles? Long wedding-trains passed before the poor mother with songs and rejoicings, as she tossed about in a feverish slumber on her bed. The nurse one night saw her whole lap full of pearls, but they all disappeared when she awoke. The gold wedding-ring slipped from the wasted fingers of the princess every night—though to be sure,

the same thing often happened by day. Who does not know that all these doleful phenomena indicate death?

Thus harassed by anxiety and care, the energetic Marfa at length prevailed upon the princess to go to St. Petersburg herself, there to gather information from the first sources. "'A fair demand brings a fair answer,' says the proverb," she urged. In Russia one can travel quickly even without railroads. Still, it was no small undertaking for a country lady advanced in years, who had never yet quitted her province, to make a journey of more than a thousand *wersts*, for the object of obtaining, if possible, a chance to look at papers, the long lists of the dead and wounded contained in which, would only have given the public an unnecessary acquaintance with the real state of things.

Fortunately the princess, as well as Marfa, knew the key which, for ages past, has opened the doors of all Russian cabinets—that of the minister of the war-department, as well as any other.

"Have rather hundred friends than hundred *roubles*,"* was the advice of the shrewd old nurse. A pocket-book well filled with bank-notes, was therefore of great service to the princess.

In St. Petersburg, Prince Alexander's silence was soon explained to his poor anxious friends. He was in the hospital at Jekaterinodar, with his right arm broken, and ill of the typhus fever.

"Now's the time, God be praised! Katharina Michailowna!" cried Marfa, with tears and sobs. "We must go and take care of our Sasha! God be praised for leaving my limbs whole, so that I can now bind up his poor, dear, beautiful arm. No quack of a doctor shall touch him! God forbid! Thank God for putting it into my stupid head to take the *Kluckwa* jelly along! That will refresh him!"

* Russian proverb.

So saying, her words interrupted by sobs, she busied herself in packing, and giving orders. The princess let her have her own way in every thing. Alarm had completely paralyzed her already listless, dull disposition. Before she knew it, she was in the travelling-carriage, half blind from weeping incessantly for several months. Heloise was moved with deep pity as she looked at the poor stricken mother. But there was something in that face, shrivelled up and distorted by grief, that repulsed her. She felt that her companion had exhausted her whole power of loving in her child; that this dried up soul might perhaps pay a certain polite attention to the daughter of the commanding general, but that she would not take the slightest interest in her as a stranger.

If Heloise, in moments of retrospection (and how often did these occur on her long, tedious journey!) gave way to her sad emotions, and tear after tear rolled down her lovely cheeks, the princess was vexed. "What sorrows can that young thing have?" she would say. "Is she not going to her father, who is now the most powerful man in New Russia, and where she will be treated like a queen?"

Indeed, no grief seemed to her to be reasonable but her own, and to talk of any thing in her presence but Sasha's wound, appeared to her a sort of arrogance. But if Heloise, after the happy manner of youth, happened to forget herself, and laugh at the capers of the village children who ran along by their carriage, or when, in the Whitsuntide holidays, which occurred during their journey, they stopped before a village inn, and she put back one of the green silk curtains, in order to amuse herself with looking at the graceful dances and ingenious games of the peasants, that was still worse. "Yes, she can well laugh," the princess thought in such cases; "she has no son to weep for! She need not care whether my Sasha lives or dies. That is my reward for

allowing myself to be persuaded to take such a young thing along with me!"

Far differently did the good nurse, as she sat opposite the princess, look upon our young traveller, from out of her narrow grayish-blue eyes. There was a mixture of cunning and good-nature in that broad, fat, bloated face—to which a flat nose and thick lips imparted a disagreeable impress of nationality—that gave it a pleasing expression of vivacity.

Of middling height, but considerable circumference, she looked right stately, with her *Sarafan* of dark blue with gold borders, her snow-white under-shirt gathered in narrow bands around the neck and wrists, and the richly embroidered *Kakoshnika* on her head. For no prospect of the burning sun of the Caucasus could have induced her to exchange this splendid headdress for a travelling-hat. If she had left off any article of her nurse's-costume, she might have been taken, on the journey, for one of the lower maids who followed the carriage of the princess in the *Britshka* in which her bedding and the greater part of her travelling-equipage were conveyed.

Marfa had nursed, besides the living Prince Gawriloff, two of the deceased children of the princess, and was therefore held in threefold respect in the family. The foster-brothers of the little princes, of which the eldest was ascribed to the father of the latter, without exciting the least jealousy on the part of his wife, all served on the manor, were treated with much consideration, received presents on their own name-days,* and those of their noble foster-brothers, and were free from military service.

Marfa was the tenderest of mothers; whether she loved her idol, Alexander Borissowitsh, still more than her own

* It is the custom in Russia for every one to celebrate their "name-day" or day of their patron saint.

children, is uncertain; enough that she was shrewd enough to *show* more affection for him; for the fate of her children depended in a measure on her love for her young master.

For twenty-seven years past she had been the confidant of the princess, and, much superior to the latter in good sense and character, had acquired an influence in the house, which far surpassed even that which the spoilt race of Russian nurses usually possesses. Although she could neither read nor write, she had yet been elevated to the position of a sort of housekeeper, and overseer of the servants, who fared very well under her rule, as it was, contrary to the usual course of things, milder than that of the princess. She was, however, rather proud of her importance, and it was an insult not soon to be forgiven, if any of her fellow-serfs ever were so familiar as to call her only Marfa, and not Marfa Pawlowna, as even her mistress often called her before others, to set them the example.

During the journey she was continually occupied with the princess, while the latter was awake. She carried on her knees a kind of table of stiff pasteboard, which also served the ladies at their meals—for they were too much in haste to stop, although provisions were plenty—on which she laid out cards for the princess three times a day. And how well she did it! How skilfully she mixed the ominous cards, so that, even if a bad sign now and then made the poor mother unhappy, a ray of hope would always gleam forth soon after. At other times the princess would lay *patience*, for which purpose the pasteboard table was moved to her lap, while the nurse talked to her and gossipped about the places which they had just left. If at last the mistress leaned back in a corner to take a nap, the ever-busy Marfa directed her whole attention to Heloise. At first, though, she was rather reserved towards the stranger, the daughter of the great general; but Heloise's childlike expression soon won the confidence, her

youthful beauty the admiration, and her quiet grief the kindest interest of this good woman.

Heloise could understand but a very few of the kind words which she directed to her, but she soon learned to distinguish many of the charming terms of endearment in which the Russian language is so rich: *Dushinka, Golubushka, Matushka, Milinka, Jachodinka*—little soul, little dove, little mother, darling, little berry—and besides these, the language of kind looks was one easy to understand. She took the opportunity of inquiring the Russian name for every thing to which she could point with her finger, and Marfa was indefatigable in teaching her the correct pronunciation, good-naturedly aiding her in her attempts, and at the same time praising her cleverness. It really grieved her to see Heloise eat so little, and she pressed her all the more to partake of the delicacies which they had brought with them, because it troubled her that the princess, in her dull indifference, entirely neglected this first duty of Russian hospitality.

But with all Marfa's admiration for the young German lady, there was still one point, on account of which she regarded her with inexhaustible wonder. This was the peach-blossom color in Heloise's cheeks, which, if long-concealed agitation of mind had blanched them a little during the last winter, had now, from the fresh air and the journey, regained their full bloom. It was so perfectly incomprehensible to Marfa that these roses, which would never bloom so freshly on any Russian bed, were not artificial, that her doubts on the matter often made the subject of her conversation with her mistress; of which the possessor and rightful owner of the roses had not the slightest suspicion. It was not enough for her two companions to know that the journey left no time for an elaborate toilet, and that Heloise, besides, never left them for a moment. One morning Marfa, under the pretext of

wiping off some dust, commenced rubbing Heloise's cheek so violently with a towel, that the latter drew back in astonishment; but when she saw how the curious woman, half surprised, and half triumphant, held the clean cloth before the eyes of the princess, and both looked at her with a certain degree of admiration, a light suddenly broke in upon her, and her whole face was instantly suffused with so lovely a glow of shame, that both her companions were forced to acknowledge themselves completely convinced.

While the princess slept, the nurse would sometimes lay her cards to tell the fortune of Heloise, who, after several unsuccessful attempts to keep her from it, at last yielded, laughingly. Exclamations of concern, of alarm were easy to understand—but the fortune-teller soon seemed to console herself, and chuckled joyfully, when her skilful combination ended, as usual, with a wedding. Heloise, with girlish curiosity, looked in her little travelling-companion, a Russian dictionary, for the often repeated words *Rasboinick* and *Ispawitel*, and soon found out that she was destined to be carried off by a highwayman, but that a splendid officer would save her, and that, from gratitude, she would bestow upon him her hand. Heloise smiled sadly; "Never, never to any one!" she whispered to herself.

Onward they travelled, day and night, for the longing of the princess for her son left her no rest. Heloise, always desirous to learn, would have found no small interest in the observation of a strange country, where every thing was new to her; but the green curtains, and the great speed with which they travelled, did not let her see much of the scenery, which however, little picturesque, from its flatness, did not offer much attraction to the eye. They passed the lovely Waldai hills in the night; in Novogorod, so full of historical associations, they only touched one of the suburbs, and even in mighty Moscow they only staid long enough to have the horses chang-

ed. And in order to have this done with the greatest possible haste, the princess had provided herself in St. Petersburg with an imperial order, which only favored personages receive, to let her have, without delay, the means of pursuing her journey.

In a *Kibitka*, which preceded the carriage of the princess, there sat, besides several servants, Andrei Ossippowitsh, the travelling-marshal, a man whose fierce, one-eyed, pock-marked face, sent a shudder through Heloise the first time that she saw him, which feeling was increased to the strongest antipathy by his imperious and rough treatment of his inferiors, his slavish cringing towards his mistress—and particularly by the circumstance that the serfs, she knew not why, called him the "beadle." He had entered the prince's house very young, had been instructed much more carefully than other favored serfs, in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the great preference which his master manifested towards him, seemed to justify the general supposition that he was his son. Caressed and abused by turns, he grew up to be the most dangerous tyrant to his fellow-servants. The prince had intended him for his steward and bailiff, and to increase his authority, had bought for him a place in the government-office in Moscow, where he had risen to the 12th class and the post of secretary of government, thus gaining the rank of captain, for which reason he was still called "Captain" by those who found an advantage in treating him with particular politeness.

The better to prepare him for his destination, the prince obtained for him, at the police of the University, the situation of "beadle," which gave him an opportunity of exercising his arm to perfection in every kind of punishment. The prince's servants, who were oftener reminded of this part of his office than of any thing else, still called him the beadle—a name which he bore in the whole neighborhood.

Since the death of the prince, his authority had increased

to a high degree; for the widow found it quite convenient to leave the management of all her affairs to him, and thought much of him, because he always spoke of Alexander as of a god. Particularly in St. Petersburg he had shown himself as an able agent, and she could not think of making the journey to her darling without him. And here, as at home, she regarded his continual scolding and quarrelling at the stations and with her servants, as proofs of his zeal.

How different was his rule from that of good old Marfa, the only one of the subjects whom he treated with familiar politeness; for he felt very well that her influence, after all, was much greater than his. The circumstance that he rode on in advance as courier, and the horses for the three vehicles therefore mostly stood ready-harnessed when they arrived, and had only to be attached, often spared Heloise the knowledge of the *means* by which they were obtained. For the poor post-peasants pulled off their caps so humbly, and smilingly, when the carriage at length came rolling along, and the postilion who drove them commenced singing merrily; the *kopeks* thrown to them were picked up with such humble thanks—just as if their backs had *not* just felt the beadle's cane, or his bright blade.

But now and then the horses were at pasture too far off, or had been taken from the plough too often for the peasants to have them in readiness so quickly, and then Heloise was witness of scenes which caused her inmost soul to revolt. Abusive language and blows rained down on the peasants, who dared not offer any resistance to the supposed imperial officer—for the beadle wore, on the journey, an embroidered civil uniform, with a sword at his side, to heighten his authority. Even the postmaster received, by turns, kicks and half a *rouble*, to induce him to let some of the horses be taken from the plough immediately; and one of the two means was sure to bring success. Heloise, with the warmth of a noble heart, could

not refrain, several times, from calling to the cruel man to control himself, and urging the princess, who looked on with cold indifference, to prevent such outrages. "What's the use?" the latter would say; "we must have horses." The nurse too, only said, "Hush, hush, *Golubushka!* You don't know our Russians. Be quieted, *Dushinka*—'one whipped man is worth two that haven't been whipped.'* Our late prince, Boris Andreitsh, used to deign to do just so when he was travelling. But, to be sure, he was a great lord! Patience, patience, Andrei Ossippowitsh! there, you see, *Milinka*, there are the horses now!"

* Russian proverb.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ARRIVAL.

At length, after a journey of eleven long days and nights, they came to the steppes inhabited by the Black Sea Cossacks—Heloise's last station, as it were, before her reunion with a beloved father. She had, on the road, written a short letter to the count, informing him of her arrival, and sent it to the camp by a courier from Asoff, the last place in which the princess intended to rest for a few hours. The letter would reach her father half a day before her; a thought which afforded her considerable relief. For, certain as she had felt of being received with warm affection, still, the nearer the decisive moment drew, the more she was tormented by the doubt whether her father would approve of the step which she had taken of her own accord, without awaiting his permission. "But no, no," she said to herself, "he will not be displeased with me! The sight of me will once more recall to his mind, will realize, his blissful dream of love, as he himself, in one of his letters, calls the brief period of his happiness. Has not my beloved foster-mother often told me—and did not the ambassador in St. Petersburg also say, the other day—that I am the image of my departed mother? How refreshing it will be to the dear exile, who has pined so long among loveless strangers, to hear the sounds of his native land once more from the lips of his child! Oh! my beloved, poor, poor father, I will belong to you entirely henceforth! You will no more be obliged to hide your long grief in your own heart. That

dear head shall rest on your daughter's bosom!" She pictured him to herself pale and suffering, his heart crushed by the broken tie of love, like his royal consort, whose life, since the separation from the object of her eternal affection, had been but a slow pining away.

She took out his miniature, which represented him as a handsome blooming man, and which, having inherited it from her mother, she carried in her bosom attached to a slight gold chain. It had been painted for Madame von Waldeck, when the count was but just twenty years old, and had been given by her to the princess. There was vigor and freshness of spirit in the handsome face; the high forehead, surrounded by chestnut locks, was of a dazzling whiteness, and around the mouth lay an expression of almost girlish softness. The portrait bore a strong resemblance to Felix, only the latter looked much more energetic and manly. "Good God!" said Heloise to herself, "how my father must have altered!"—but she thought only of the changes brought forth by grief, not of those which life had worked. "Ah!" she said, as she pressed the miniature to her lips, "what a warm tender heart is portrayed in these features! I know well it is with the dead! But whatever part of it still belongs to this world, you owe to your child, who, in her turn, gives you the whole of hers!"

The steppes through which they were now passing, only form, in fact, the broad base of the lofty Circassian mountains, which divide Asia from Europe. The soil, rocky, chalky, and unfruitful, affords but poor sustenance for the strong, vigorous race which Catharine's shrewd policy enticed hither from the flourishing shores of the Dnieper, to practise, as guardians of the frontier, the warlike trade to which they had been bred, to Russia's advantage. No smile of nature here rejoices the heart of the traveller—unless it is the frank, reckless cheerfulness of the inhabitants, which all the horrors of a war that requires the sacrifice of the best part of their young men, have

not yet subdued. Heloise's spirit was troubled, yet she saw with pleasure the picturesque figures of the old Zaporogueans, and, if she had been familiar with the language, would have enjoyed listening to their glorious national songs, which they brought from the Dnieper, and which glowed with hatred against the "Lech,"* once the oppressor, but now the oppressed. Full of sad, vague forebodings, she approached the confines of a new world.

They were now quite near to the seat of war. Before them lay the gradual descent of the last Caucasian ridge, which forms the northern inclosure of the Cuban valley. It seems as if the Spirit of the mountain had once more summoned all his failing giant force at this the boundary of his dominions, for, measured from the bottom of the valley, the sides of the rock on the South rise, at some points, to the perpendicular height of four hundred feet. The slopes near the river are covered with woodland and cultivated fields. The road rises slightly as it winds through the pass which leads into the broad Cuban valley, and the ridges gradually separate more and more, so that the entrance into the valley resembles a broad open plain. There lay, surrounded by woodland, the city of Jekaterinodar, with its fortifications. To the West, not more than half a mile from it, on the open meadow land, the white tents of the Russian camp were extended in long regular files.

Heloise's heart beat violently. She leaned out of the carriage-window and cast her eye over the broad valley, so highly favored by nature. There flowed the mighty, rapid stream, which every day bore so many corpses to the sea; on each side of it swampy meadows, ornamented with rows of tall, noble trees, which, planted side by side, as if by human hands, mark, even at a distance, the course of the river

* Another name for the Poles.

which sparkles among the rich green. For several miles beyond the swamps, on the southern bank, lay extended the richest pastures and arable land. Nature seemed to offer ample means of subsistence for thousands; but, for centuries past, men had sowed nothing but blood on this ground; now a luxurious crop had sprung up. In the far background arose, amphitheatre-like, the dark, woody mountains, from which innumerable little sparkling torrents leaped on towards the Cuban, telling tales of the lovely hidden valleys and ravines through which they had passed. From the thick woods on the mountain-plains there arose on all sides dense black clouds of smoke, darkening the southern sky, marking the spots which once were populous Circassian villages—but now desolate heaps of blackened ruins.

For some time back, our friends had been reminded, by sentinels stationed here and there, sutlers who were passing along with their wagons, and now and then a Cossack who flew by them on his swift steed, that they were approaching the end of their journey. Now the scene suddenly grew more lively. A considerable body of infantry came marching towards them, leading in their midst twenty or thirty men, without arms, and their hands bound. Their Oriental warlike costumes, showed Heloise that they must be Circassian prisoners. The procession advanced—several officers, obviously on duty, rode on before and beside it. Others were galloping to and fro, unoccupied, as it seemed, and only brought there by curiosity.

The princess ordered the postillion to drive to one side, and to stop until the troops had passed. On entering the valley they had already remarked an open space surrounded by sentinels, at the entrance to which a couple of cannons threatened destruction to every intruder. The soldiers were now close to them, and while the young officers regarded the veiled ladies and their travelling-equipage with inquisitive

boldness, Heloise, sadly and with pity, gazed at the noble countenances and commanding forms of the young Circassians, who, their power subdued by their chains, seemed to meet their fate with the stoical indifference peculiar to the Orientals, which borders upon contempt. "Most probably," thought Heloise, "these unfortunate men will be taken to the interior of Russia, and there, instead of fighting for the freedom of their country, will be forced to work on some road for their enemies, while their mothers and wives are weeping for them. What a horrible thing is war!"

Suddenly the nurse cried out, "Look yonder, Katharina Michailowna! is not that our nephew, Wassilei Iwanowitsh? God be praised! it is he!" and with this she fell to nodding and beckoning, by which the young officer, who was not on duty, was soon brought to their side.

"God be praised, nephew, that I have found you here," said the princess, and her voice trembled as she added: "How is Alexander Borissowitsh?"

"He is better, God be praised; you have nothing more to fear on that score, my dear aunt," was the reply; "his arm is not yet entirely well, and therefore he is still at the hospital, but the fever has left him. What a good mother you are, Katharina Michailowna," he added, with a side-glance at Heloise, whose blooming beauty shone through her green veil. "A companion," he thought, and kindly saluted the nurse, whom he had long known.

Both the good women were loud in their praises to God for this good news, and then the princess asked, "But what is going on here, Wassilei Iwanowitsh?"

"An every-day scene," said the young man, smoothing his moustache. "Some prisoners of war are being led to the place of execution, to be shot for deserting."

"Shot!" cried both his friends—and Heloise looked at the speaker with horror.

"They are Kabardines," he continued, with indifference, "who have been enlisted for the emperor, and put in one of our cavalry-regiments. The Kabarda belongs to us, and its so-called princes were obliged to swear allegiance to the emperor. But there is no dependence on these scoundrels; leave them unwatched a moment and off they will be, in large companies, to join the rebel Notachaizes and Shapzucks, who are now giving us so much to do. They steal from the camp in the night and swim through the Cuban like fish, without laying off their arms. Confounded fellows! These, now, were caught again by the Cossacks, and Count Staden has ordered them to be shot."

Heloise uttered a scream—"My father!" she cried, in a tone of agony.

The officer looked at her in surprise.

"Ah, I forgot," said the princess, in explanation, "she is the daughter of the commander-in-chief; she does not understand Russian—speak French to her."

The young man touched his hat respectfully: he was in the highest degree surprised, but immediately assumed a gallant tone, and spoke, in tolerable French, of the infinite happiness of making her acquaintance. But Heloise interrupted him:

"Is it possible," she said, in the same language—"is it possible that it is my father who causes these unhappy beings to be shot? Ah, Monsieur, can you not delay it, only till I have spoken to my father? He will not refuse the first request which his daughter makes to him in her life!"

"You do me the honor to think me more influential than I am," replied the lieutenant, repressing a smile. "But believe me, Mademoiselle, if the camp is to have the happiness of your presence for any length of time, you will often find occasions to speak a kind word in such cases as this. They happen here every day."

"Can it be possible," cried Heloise, in a tone of anguish, "that my father is so cruel?"

"It is but the right of war, Mademoiselle. They do not treat our men any better over yonder. But allow me to ask, is his Excellency aware of the happiness of your arrival? Will you do me the honor to let me be your messenger?"

So saying, he had already turned his horse, impatient to serve her, and when she said in a low voice, "You will oblige me, Monsieur," his eyes sparkled with pleasure at being able to oblige so beautiful a young lady, and particularly the daughter of the commander-in-chief.

"I would advise you, however, my dear aunt," he said, before he rode off towards the camp, "not to stay here any longer.—I see they have reached the place of execution, and the affair will soon begin. It might shake your nerves."

"Drive on, quick, postillion!" cried the three females, with one voice, and when the lieutenant galloped off, the travelling-carriage followed him at full speed. But in vain—a shot was heard, and another—and at last, shot upon shot, and echo gave them back from the mountains with a voice of thunder. The princess and the nurse shuddered; the latter, however, remarked, as consolation, "that they were only Circassians, who had no religion—they were nothing but heathens and Turks." The princess remembered that one of these was perhaps the villain who shot Sasha in the arm. But Heloise, pale and trembling, pressed her hands to her eyes, from which hot tears were streaming. Every shot sent a tremor through her frame. "Again, and again," she thought, "a soul is ascending to heaven—to eternity. And, oh God, it is *my father* who sends them at his will to their last account!"

Meanwhile Andrei Ossipowitsh had gone on before them in his *Kibitka* to Jekaterinodar, and had already taken possession of a house in the city, which happened to be to let, for the reception of his mistress. It was a long, one-story building,

lightly constructed of wood, after the Russian fashion; in the court were several smaller houses which served the purpose of a kitchen and store-rooms. Heloise had assigned to her one of the best rooms, which had a separate entrance from the street. A broad divan which extended along the wall, was to be arranged as a bed every night, and Proskovia, the maid which the princess had loaned her, would sleep, according to custom, on a mattress at her feet.

The princess, accompanied by the nurse and several servants, went immediately to the hospital. Heloise remained alone, waiting to hear from her father. Proskovia asked her for the key to her trunk, to take out another dress and a change of linen. She did not prevent her, but, painfully agitated as she was, she could not bestow any thoughts on her toilet. She merely had the dust brushed from her clothes, cooled her burning face and eyes with fresh water, and smoothed her hair. This done, she seated herself quietly, absorbed in sad thoughts and trembling with expectation, in a corner of the divan.

The servant who had brought the water had, on her first entrance, attracted Heloise's notice by her singular dress. She now returned, on some new errand, and Heloise looked at her in astonishment at the queenly manner in which her tall, slender figure moved about in performing her menial duties. Her features were perfectly regular—the nose Grecian, but the lower part of the face somewhat longer than is required by the rules of antique beauty. Over her large, melancholy eyes, which were half hidden by long lashes, and so dark that the iris could hardly be distinguished from the pupil, were drawn, in high, strongly-marked arches, the blackest eyebrows that Heloise ever had seen. The head was remarkably small, but well formed, and covered with a little many-colored cap, composed of six divisions, from under which the long, thick black hair hung down over the

back in seven elaborate braids. The figure, by our rules, could hardly be called fine. The bosom was flattened down entirely by a tightly-laced corset of red leather, the front of which was composed of two boards. It was the sign of an unmarried female. Broad silver hooks were set down the front from the throat to the bottom of the waist. This bodice is worn continually, even in sleep, thus unnaturally hindering the growth of the bosom, and only in the bridal night the lacings are cut by the bridegroom. With the exception of this fault, the girl's form was superb. Her full loose drawers, of yellow calico, were so wide as to resemble a woman's skirt. A light-blue underdress, with tight sleeves, reached to just above the knees. A long woollen overdress, of a thick, dark-purple stuff, open in front, with loose sleeves somewhat shorter than the tight ones of the underdress, gave an air of dignity to the whole figure. Sadly and silently her commanding form moved to and fro, dusting the furniture with a bunch of feathers.

Suddenly a shrill female voice called: "Guasha!" The girl immediately turned towards the door, by which the hostess, a fair, pretty Austrian, entered at the same time, and informed her in broken Russian, that she herself would do what was to be done in the room.

"I have just heard from your honor's people out there," she said, smilingly, and attempting respectfully to kiss Heloise's hand, which the latter however withdrew, "that your honor's from the dear old fatherland too, and so I felt very much like chatting a little German again with the young lady."

Heloise, to be sure, was not just in the humor to "chat a little," but it awakened in her also a feeling of joy to hear German once more after so long a time, bad as this woman's German was. Nevertheless, she gave rather short answers to the inquisitive questions of Madame Terlaitsh, (this was the

name of her hostess,) but asked with interest: "but how did you yourself come to this end of Europe?"

"Well, your honor sees," replied the other, laughing; "that's a queer kind of a story. No one thought, when I was born, that I should shrivel up here among Tartars and Kalmucks. To make a long story short—I went with a lady from Vienna to Constantinople. And there a Russian princess offered me high wages and an annuity if I'd go with her to St. Peterburg, and I let myself be persuaded, and went. It was a sin and a sorrow, your honor! You see, all of a sudden she fell in love, my new lady did—for she was a widow—and couldn't stay in St. Petersburg any longer, and must go to her lands in the Crimea, and to Taganrog, and I had to go along with her, all among the Tartars. In Taganrog," she interrupted herself, with a sly laugh, "she had some business. Enough, there I fell in with a sort of countryman of mine, such a Slovak or Russniak* from Hungary, and he had a ribbon store there, for your honor must know, Taganrog is a great commercial city. Well, every now and then I had to buy gloves, or some such thing there, for my lady—and so—it all happened just so. But I won't incommode your honor any more with my story—only one thing more. Terlaitsh hadn't but just got me for his wife before he was unlucky in business, and now he is going to try again here. But it's a forlorn place, your honor, you'll never feel comfortable here."

"But who is that girl that you called Guasha?"

"Your honor liked her, didn't you? Poor thing! She's a nice girl; she's a Circassian, and she was carried off by the wild Cossacks from the country of the Shapzuks. What a war that is! There they fall upon one another, like birds of prey, and kill and burn. The poor child's father and mother, and brothers and sisters, were all cut down before

* Slavonian tribes in Hungary.

her eyes. You see, your honor, her father was a *Work*—that's what they call the noblemen there. But your honor mustn't think, for all that, that any sort of labor's too hard for her—oh no! the Circassian princesses have to work harder than the servants with us. I just wanted one, and so I bought her of a Cossack. She's well enough off with me, your honor."

"And the poor girl still wears her native costume," asked Heloise—"all that is left her?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the hostess; "the dress is very fine—it does mighty well for a masquerade. My princess went to the masquerade that the city of Taganrog gave in honor of Count Staden, dressed like a Circassian, but all in velvet and silk, and jewels, where Guasha has those plated hooks. I'm sure she couldn't have found a better way to make a conquest of him—she looked like a sultana at the theatre."

"Count—who?" asked Heloise in surprise.

"Aha,"—said the woman, with a smile—"now it's out, after all! Well—it couldn't have been a secret long. You see, your honor—that was the business that took my princess to Taganrog. She wanted to engage herself to Count Staden in St. Petersburg—for she's immensely rich, and handsome enough too, by candlelight—its only a pity that all the Russian ladies paint so much, red and white, and then look like ghosts in the daytime. But just then the count had to go to the Caucasus, and the emperor don't like so many women-folks along with the army. But my princess was awfully ambitious, and now, when he had become commander-in-chief, she was crazy to have him. And so she went to her estates on the Black Sea, and there she wrote to the count, and they agreed to have a meeting in Taganrog. I had to laugh, when every one said, and it was in all the newspapers, that the general was coming to Taganrog himself, to see if the

troops had provisions enough; but I knew better. In Taganrog they got engaged to each other, and the general is going to marry her, as soon as he is recalled; for your honor must know that no one long keeps the upper hand here. But I'm talking too much, I am tiring you, Miss—your honor looks as pale as a sheet—I'll run and make you some tea."

"Do so, my good woman," said Heloise, languidly, hardly above a whisper; "the journey has fatigued me."

The landlady left the room. Heloise remained motionless, pale, and cold as marble. Was all, all to be taken from her? Not only the image of the humane man in her father, but also that of the faithful, mourning husband? Had she left her home, her brother, her friends, to seek, through deserts and wildernesses, a man to whom she was bound by no tie but that of filial piety—no similarity of feelings, of views, of principles? She had no mother, no brother, and now was she to find that she had no father either?

CHAPTER XIII.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

At this moment, a bustle in the street attracted Heloise's attention. She heard horsemen approaching and alighting—then a few orders given by a loud, commanding voice, whose tones penetrated to her inmost soul. She sat as if paralyzed. The door flew open. A tall, noble-looking man stood before her—strong of limb, with princely deportment, a dark bronze complexion, a commanding mien, and penetrating eye. He was dressed in the rich uniform of a Russian general; his broad breast gleamed with stars and orders of the highest rank. His age appeared hardly more than thirty-five. Was it possible that this brilliant, noble-looking man, was her father?

She arose, on his entrance, and advanced a few steps. "Can it be true," he asked, with a deep, searching look, "that my daughter stands before me? Heloise, the child of my love?"

All the deep, warm love with which, on her way, she had looked forward to this meeting, was brought back to her heart at the gentle sound of his voice: "My father!" she whispered—she would have embraced his knees, but he caught her in his arms. She trembled; and he also was deeply moved.

He led her back to the divan, gently seated her, and himself beside her, retaining her hand in his. There was something in the lofty, imposing appearance of the father that also gave the daughter force to suppress her deep emotion. She

would have been ashamed to give way to tears in his presence; she felt that she must leave it to his penetration to read her soul—as if she ought not to unfold it to him herself. He looked at her long, with affectionate earnestness, and, with a quick and correct feeling, she understood his request, when she was about to speak, that she would compose herself, to express the wish that she would *manifest* more composure—that is, not speak before she was calm enough not to let her words be interrupted by tears.

"Father," she at last said—and the pure accent of her gentle voice had a delicious sound to him who had so long been banished from his fatherland—"father, so you are not displeased that I have sought you?"

"Did you fear my displeasure?" he asked, with a smile.

"Certainly not when I left Germany, dear father; then I only had the one predominant feeling, the longing to throw myself on your paternal breast. But when I entered upon this stage of war, where you reign like a prince, where your head can be filled only with important things, and the voice of the heart is drowned by the clashing of swords—then a fear seized me that my coming might not be agreeable to you. Yes, father, smile, if you will," and she too smiled, but there was a holy truthfulness in her eye—"I have *loved* you for sixteen years, for that is about as long as I can remember; but to-day I have also learned to *fear* you."

"That you had better leave to the men," said the count, laughing. "No," he continued, affectionately putting his arm around her, and leaning her head against his shoulder, "I am not displeased—you are welcome to me," and with this he kissed her pure white forehead, with a seriousness which had something solemn for Heloise's tender heart. "However, I confess that I would rather have received you somewhere else. This wild theatre of war is not fit for a gentle girl. I would wish to spare you every sorrow, which

I cannot do here. Only the soft west wind should fan you, you tender plant—the hot Sirocco which blows from yon Asiatic mountains, ought not to touch the German child of princes."

Heloise raised her head: "Be unconcerned, father; you perhaps think me weak, because this moment has moved me so deeply—but I am not weak, I am not feeble, father! I am willing to bear every privation, ready for any thing which you or circumstances require of me. Tell me, dear father, is not that true female heroism? For fighting your battles, you have probably men enough," she added with a smile.

"It is enough," he replied, kissing her, "that you are now here—and my days will in future have their bright moments too. We will endeavor to entwine some roses among the laurels."

Hereupon he made some inquiries about her journey, and the circumstances of the death of the old prince, which, in vindication of her appearing as his daughter, she had informed him of in the few lines which he received shortly before her arrival. He avoided speaking of any thing which might have agitated her more—did not mention his sister's death—neither did he ask after Felix. While he was speaking, he looked at her closely, but with obvious satisfaction, for his practised eye easily detected, in those features which bore the traces of the fatigue of a long journey, and an expression of painful excitement, the uncommon beauty of his daughter. When he had gained his end, and saw her somewhat composed, he took leave of her, with the advice to lie down immediately and try to obtain the refreshing sleep of which she had been deprived during her journey. "I will meanwhile consider," he added, "what can be done to provide suitable accommodations for you. To-morrow we meet again."

She was about to accompany him to the door, where a

servant was holding his horse, and one of his adjutants was awaiting him. But he kept her back in the room by an embrace, saying: "You are hardly in a state to present yourself; the general's daughter must not for a moment be an object of pity. *Au revoir.*"

Heloise watched him through the window-panes as he rode off. A curious crowd had assembled below, wondering what had brought the great general, so feared by every one, to this place, with such a small suite.

The count, by his affectionately-cool manner, had accomplished his purpose entirely—Heloise had grown much more calm. His appearance of superiority had had a beneficial effect on her, and his paternal caresses had done her good.

By degrees she had discovered in his face, so deeply marked by the storms of life, enough features that resembled the youthful one in the portrait, and particularly a strong likeness to her beloved fostermother; which increased her confidence in him with every moment. Yet she was far from being satisfied—her thirst for love was not quenched. She said to herself, "I ought to thank God that it is thus"—but she felt no gratitude in her heart. At length she laid down, completely exhausted, and the long, sound, refreshing sleep into which she immediately sank, can only be imagined by those of my readers who, like her, have spent twelve successive nights in the travelling-carriage.

The sun was already high in the heavens when Heloise awoke the next morning. She felt refreshed, and, feeling that she owed her father this attention, she dressed with particular care. It was now over fifteen months since Madame von Waldeck's death, and she had left off deep mourning, but still wore usually plain black silk, avoiding all ornaments of any kind. Her rich, soft, ash-colored hair was combed smoothly behind her small and delicately formed ears, and was laid around the back of the head in a heavy, thick braid:

a part of her headdress on which Lisette had always expended all her skill. To-day, however, Heloise tried her hand at it herself, because she did not wish to wake Proskovia, who, still extended on her mattress, was making up for the sleep she had lost, and, besides, because she did not like to trust herself to her rough, unaccustomed hands. She chose from her wardrobe a simple but very becoming mourning-dress of the finest cambric, the dazzling whiteness of which was only heightened by the tiny black spots which were sprinkled over it. A narrow collar of rich lace, which surrounded her delicate throat, was fastened by a plain brooch of Berlin iron. The whole dress, with its grave simplicity, reflected the serious tenor of her pure mind.

She did not wake Proskovia—who jumped up in great alarm at having overslept herself—until she had finished dressing, and then directed her to put every thing in order, as she expected the general. She herself, meanwhile, went to the princess, who, with the nurse, broke out in lamentations at Sasha's situation, and gave, particularly, the most horrible description of the hospital; which, indeed, was not exaggerated. To-day, at noon, the young prince was to be brought over to their apartments.

Hour after hour passed, and her father did not come. At length an adjutant arrived, as his messenger—a handsome, polished young man, of one of the first families in the empire. In St. Petersburg, when he was stationed there, among the Guards, he had been the lion of the fashionable world—a beau of the most aristocratic circles, a Russian Pelham. On the stage of war, in the wilderness, his better nature had been roused; on several expeditions into the mountains he had accomplished wonders of bravery, and as formerly his ambition had led him to subdue women's hearts, so all his ideas now turned upon conquering Circassians. A dandy will not so easily turn into an able statesman, but that physical courage

which makes a brave warrior, is often found in empty, unemployed minds.

The news, however, of the arrival of the beautiful German countess, the mighty general's daughter, had reminded him once more that the Graces, the attendants of Venus, may sometimes wait also upon wild Mars. He was proud of being made the messenger of the great man. A look in the glass, a few strokes of the comb and brush over his hair and moustache, half a bottle of Eau de Cologne, which had lain forgotten in some corner of his travelling-case, poured over his handkerchief, and the enlivening prospect of once more standing before a handsome and noble woman—more was not necessary to carry him back to the days of his easy conquests. Heloise's simple deportment, which had so much natural dignity and nothing in the least fashionable in it, seemed to strike him.

"His Excellency sends me, Mademoiselle," he said, in such pure French, that Heloise would have taken him for a native of France, "to inform you that, with a great deal of trouble, he has not yet succeeded in obtaining the impossible, that is, to find, among the huts of this wretched village, a residence which is worthy of receiving his daughter. The family of a crown-officer, who occupied the least miserable house of the place, have at last been induced to give it up to Mademoiselle. The people made as many difficulties as if it were a palace which they were to leave. In a few hours it will be put in tolerable order, and his Excellency will then have the honor to conduct Mademoiselle there himself."

"I regret exceedingly," replied Heloise, who did not for a moment doubt that she was to occupy this house with her father—"I regret exceedingly that my arrival has been the occasion of depriving another family of their property."

"Where is the Russian who would not be happy to serve the daughter of the great general?" answered Count Dabanoff—

this was the name of the adjutant—with a smile, the sarcastic expression of which was rendered less apparent by the respectful bow which accompanied it. "And indeed, countess, you must prepare yourself to be accused of far more serious devastations than this."

"Do you perhaps hope for my aid against the Circassians, Monsieur?" inquired Heloise, with a shade of irony.

"The fame of our arms would be for ever past, if those savages could be wounded by a pair of handsome eyes as easily as Russian hearts." A polite sigh accompanied these words.

"Enough, enough, Monsieur," interrupted Heloise, with a cold smile—"be so kind as to tell my father that I shall be ready for him at any time."

Count Dabanoff made a low bow, and in a few minutes Heloise heard him galloping away. She approached the window, and noticed, for the first time, that a sentry was stationed before her house. The latter was situated in a broad street, almost a square; in one of the smaller buildings which lay nearly opposite, she saw the door open, and trunks and furniture being carried in. She conjectured immediately that this was the house into which the family who had given up their own better one, to her father, were moving.

She was still standing by the window, when her hostess entered, and, with some confusion, begged her pardon for the incautious manner in which she had spoken of the count the day before.

"For how should I know that his Excellency was your honor's own father? In this country, please you, we are in such fear of the chief-general, that we think a child of his couldn't travel any other way than like a princess, in a state carriage, and with body-Cossacks before, and body-Cossacks behind."

Heloise begged her not to be uneasy—although the remembrance of what Madame Terlaitsh had said yesterday, pierced her heart—and remarked that she had said nothing bad of him.

"No, indeed," replied the other, and every trace of embarrassment disappeared from her naturally frank manner, which had in it all the cordiality of southern Germany. "Marrying's no sin, for sure and for certain, or else our Lord wouldn't have ordered it, and his Excellency hasn't taken a vow, like a priest."

Heloise, penetrated with painful emotions, turned again to the window, when she saw a procession coming down the street, which excited her attention. It was a litter carried by four men, on which, wrapped in bedding, and the face half-covered with a veil, lay what seemed a sick person. Several people—among them an elderly man, with hair bleached before its time, and a face furrowed with grief—walked on both sides; the latter half leaning over the litter, and apparently occupied with the sick person.

"That must be Prince Alexander," thought Heloise, as the procession approached the house in which she was. But now it was just under her window—it did not stop. With deep pity she recognized, under the veil, the sunken face of a woman, pale as death—the most touching picture of long years of suffering. The old man bent down affectionately over the sick woman; but suddenly he darted, half-unconsciously as it seemed, a glance so full of anguish, so reproachful, at Heloise, that she shuddered. The train passed slowly by her door, and then across the street to the above-mentioned house, where some younger females appeared to be in readiness to receive the sick person.

"What is that?" asked Heloise—her heart beating with a dreadful conjecture—of the landlady, who stood at the other window.

"Oh!" replied the other, drying her eyes—"it is the assessor, and his sick wife. He built the house himself, that your father wants for your honor now; it's the best house in the place, and he has brought up several children there, and closed the eyes of some in it. But he would have given it up willingly, nevertheless, for his Excellency pays like a prince, that's a fact; and the wife's long sickness hasn't left much in the poor fellow's purse. But the sick woman didn't want to go away, and wouldn't do it—and said she had hoped to die there. And so the man refused so long, and so obstinately—very different from what's usually the way of the Russians when a great man wants something. And your honor's father is like the emperor here. And so his Excellency sent a parcel of servants into the house, and they carried off all their things before their eyes. Those people are brutal enough here, when they serve any one that's in power. That house opposite has been given to them, because it was empty. For your honor it wouldn't have been nice enough, to be sure—but those poor people will have room enough in it, I think. They don't want very much."

Heloise had burst into tears while Madame Terlaitsh was speaking. She sighed deeply, but had not time to give way to her emotions, for just then her father drove up.

When he stood before her, with his stern, penetrating eye and commanding mien, even his smiling salutation could not re-awaken her confidence.

"Has the time seemed long to you?" he inquired. "It gave me some trouble to find accommodations for you—and as it is, you must expect nothing but military quarters."

"The smallest apartment would have been sufficient for me," said Heloise, casting down her eyes. "I hoped, dear father, that you would find a place for me in your tents."

"Bravo!" cried the general, laughing. "I did not know what a fine soldier's child I had for a daughter!" As he

said this, his eye fell on Madame Terlaitsh, who stood at the other side of the room. He looked somewhat disconcerted; a dark glow overspread his face. But the next moment, already, his countenance assumed a still haughtier and more impenetrable expression than before; he looked like one who is ashamed of being ashamed.

"What!" he exclaimed—"you here, Nanny? How did you come here?"

"Please your honor," replied the fair-haired Austrian, without the slightest embarrassment; "your Excellency must know I left the princess long ago, and I've been here almost three months. A body can't always stay single, your honor knows. My husband's a merchant, and he's travelling now; and I try to get an honest living by letting my house to travellers. Yesterday the Princess Gawriloff took it."

While she was speaking, the general, who had a peculiar tact for employing every moment, and turning even disadvantages to advantage, had formed a plan.

"This is very convenient for me," he said; "my daughter is unacquainted with the language of this country, and wants a German attendant Don't say a word, fair Nanny—you make a capital little *soubrette*. You shall have as many assistants as you wish, and besides, superintend the household of the countess. Make no objections—I accede to your conditions beforehand. You know whether or not I give good wages."

"Don't I know it?" replied Nanny; "but, to be frank, and begging your pardon, your honor, I'm tired of being in service—and Russian service, above all, I've had enough of;" and, seeing the count beginning to frown, she continued: "Well, your honor, don't look sour. If I do it, I do it because the young countess there has such a saint's-face, and not for the sake of money." Heloise, pleased with her father's proposition, had turned her eyes upon her in supplication.

"You may do it for any reason you wish," said the count, somewhat haughtily. "Pack up quickly whatever you want, and follow us this evening. The countess will not need you before she retires. She will find some wenches there whom I have borrowed in haste."

He gave Heloise his arm and led her to the carriage. The princess had gone to the hospital for her son. The general promised to call on her soon with Heloise, to thank her for her protection.

"Borrowed! wenches!" mumbled Nanny, as he left; "he's got enough German feeling of shame, at least, not to speak in his daughter's presence of the servants that he has *bought* for her in a hurry. For he'll remember well enough that in dear Germany they don't buy men and women like cattle, and don't speak as contemptuously of a respectable ladies'-maid as they do here. Well, she'll have to get accustomed to it too, the dear little angel!"

The house to which the general took his daughter, was indeed one of the best in the place. True, it had but one story, and was built of wood, like all the rest, but it was more substantial and better finished; a broad portico supported on pillars, which surrounded it, gave it a distinguished and temple-like appearance. The furniture had been hastily collected—a mixture of old and new, and ill-matched. The whole household bore a similar stamp. A number of servants were already awaiting Heloise's arrival: a cook, housemaids, valets, a coachman, and outriders. She heard to her dismay that she was to reside here alone, separated from her father, as he, for the present, was retained by his duty in the camp.

He hoped, in a few days, to obtain for her a companion, as it seemed hardly suitable for a lady of her rank to appear alone. The commandant of Jekaterinodar, an officer of merit, and the father of daughters who were growing up, had procured from the imperial institution in Moscow, a governess,

at a very great expense. She belonged to the nobility, spoke French, could play dances and sonatas on the piano, and was the pride of the family. But the general now had need of her for his daughter. He begged the major to let him have her, as a favor for which he would show himself grateful. The major swallowed his vexation and made a low bow. Mademoiselle Kalinoffska was not a little delighted with the exchange—it seemed to her like a promotion in rank. The next day, already, she arrived with trunks and bundles; but she was an empty chatterbox, who brought no consolation to Heloise's isolated heart. The evening before, Madame Terlaitsh had come, and, at the desire of her new mistress, had brought Guasha with her.

Thus our heroine found herself, quite unexpectedly, at the head of a large household—indeed, a kind of court. There was a singular mixture of paltry splendor and disguised inconvenience; here a profusion of things that could as well have been dispensed with, and there a want of such as were most necessary. A row of apartments was at her service, but, as mentioned above, scantily and unsuitably furnished, as well as could be done in so short a time; here a mirror with a splendid gilt frame, and under it a table, from under the many-colored worsted cover of which, pine-wood legs protruded: here rich silk window-curtains, and all around the room divans, the cushions of which, flattened by long use, were covered with faded chintz. Her meals were served on silver dishes, and she ate them off earthenware plates; the table was covered with a damask cloth, while the napkins were full of holes, and of the coarsest kind. Every day her table was loaded with a quantity of dishes, of which she and her companion would have left the third part untasted, even if the French cook, who had come on with the army as packer, and, in his own country, had probably never seen any other kitchen than that of a country inn or a sutler's tent, had pre-

pared them with any skill. A host of servants filled her halls and antechambers, who passed their leisure time in playing cards and dice. In vain their mistress looked around for their bedrooms. During the night they lay stretched about on the floor of Heloise's drawing-rooms and dining-hall, wrapped in blankets that were spread out at night as quickly as they were taken away in the morning. "That's the fashion of this country, your honor," said Madame Terlaitsh, or Nanny, as she was now again called; "the cattle have their stables, but the servants haven't even got a room to sleep in."

Her father sometimes dined with her, and oftener still he made a passing visit, or invited her to the camp, to which she rode in a carriage and six, with her companion by her side, and two footmen stationed behind. A guard of honor accompanied her there and back. And, indeed, she received such homage as she had always thought was paid only to a princess. Her appearance, when, after having been received at the entrance of the camp by her father and a number of the first officers with the most marked attention, she passed, leaning on the arm of the former, through the long lines of tents and their respectfully saluting inhabitants, to that of the general, threw the whole camp into commotion, and there was no one, whose eye did not admiringly follow the noble couple.

The animated theatre of war had a certain attraction for Heloise; at least that of a striking novelty: here lay a band of soldiers between the tents, playing dice; there some wounded men, who, on one of their expeditions, had been struck by the arrows of the Circassians, were being brought home on litters, made of boughs of trees; here again some light-hearted creatures, who would to-morrow perhaps meet with a similar or worse fate, were dancing to the sounds of the *Balalaika*. There a fierce corporal was drilling, with oaths and blows, a few lamentable recruits, and then again the party passed

some recovered deserters, among them many an unfortunate Pole—or a troop of Circassian prisoners.

Towards her, her father was never otherwise than kind and full of delicate attentions; yet here, in his sphere, he gave only the impression of a stern master, more feared than beloved. In his conversations with her he was often *distrait*, absent. His lips often smiled while his eyes showed displeasure. They were often alone together—for Mademoiselle Kalinoffska could not be counted any one; the count did not take the least notice of her—and this led Heloise, in the beginning, to hope that she might win his confidence; but their interviews were always so short, so often interrupted by business, that she never could find time for an introduction of the subject. As for asking questions, quite unprepared, of this man with the commanding eye—she had not the courage for that.

He himself questioned her but little. He seemed, with his sharp eye, to look her through, before she could unfold herself to him. Only once, he spoke of Felix: "My sister at one time communicated to me a plan," he said, "which the princess also approved of. She wished to have her son marry you. What prevented its execution?"

Heloise answered in a low voice: "Felix's heart had already chosen for itself, father."

"Indeed! So he is married. Did my sister approve of his choice?"

"She never heard of it. You know Felix was far away when his dear mother died."

"Well, well—hm—was the girl rich? This is not a face that one would reject," he added, taking her by the chin.

"Oh! Emma is a thousand times handsomer than I," cried Heloise sadly, and blushing deeply; "riches would not have bribed Felix's generous heart."

The count soon knew all that Heloise wished to tell him. The rest he easily conjectured. One thing only he did not learn—that his daughter, from pride and shame, had, until her departure, left her cousin under the impression that he was her brother.

"Well," he said at last, "I confess that I too would have wished this connection. I would like to have had you settled on your estates, as the wife of a German nobleman, independent of the humor and favor of superiors, far from the bustle of a world which will never make you happy. It was your foster-mother's idea—for such plans have always their cradle in women's hearts. We might have known it beforehand if we had been wise—for the enthusiasm of love requires a certain visual distance, a certain magic illumination, to shed its light over the only half-recognized object—of which fraternal familiarity can know nothing. I should have thought, indeed," he added, looking at her with fond admiration, "that my Heloise would have been proof against even the closest proximity. But it is just as well so; now that you are here, you shall not want an establishment which will far surpass in splendor that which Felix could have offered you."

"Oh! my father!" interrupted Heloise, "do not think of such a thing! Let me stay with you. It is only for your sake that I came here. Are we not both equally alone in the world?"

She did not think of Madame Terlaitsh and her princess, when she said this. But the count's face was suddenly covered with crimson. "I have some doubt," he said, with a laugh, "of your always thinking so."

Only once, too, he made inquiries respecting the two deaths which concerned him so nearly, and willingly gave way for half an hour to a deeper emotion. That of his royal partner, it is true, had been crowded somewhat into the

background by the seventeen years of strife, and life in the world, which lay between the present and his short dream of love. The wound had healed, though it had left a scar. But the fresher one caused by his sister's death was not yet entirely cured. The retrospect to the harmless innocence of childhood has, even for the man of the world, something touching. With the death of his sister, the tie seemed broken which bound him to the past. Heloise's unexpected appearance only had renewed it. However, he carefully avoided touching upon the subject again.

His conversations with Heloise were mostly short, and turned upon matters of indifference. Nevertheless, his daughter's heart beat higher when he approached. She sometimes inwardly compared him with Angern. Both had been matured by the storms of life, the minds of both aspired to great things. But how entirely different they were! In conversation Angern always knew how to give importance to the least thing, to attach an idea to the most commonplace subject—her father, on the other hand, passed lightly over every thing, and yet a thinking person would feel that under the words which slid along on the surface, a deeper soul was concealed. Both seemed to press onward, with firm steps, to a fixed goal: the struggle for the rights of man, for the good of the people, was the aim of one; martial fame, the satisfying of an inordinate ambition, the task of the other. Angern would have laid down his life for liberty; Count Staden dedicated his, with no smaller sacrifice, to the harshest despotism. Heloise loved her father devotedly; but she felt with deep sorrow that his breast was no place for a wounded heart to rest on.

CHAPTER XIV.

GUASHA AND HER HOME.

Nearly ten weeks had passed, since Heloise had left her native land. A new world had been opened to her, into which she looked with all the excitability of a fresh, youthful mind. Still she had enough leisure left her to think of the past, and to long to hear from her distant friends. Immediately after her arrival she had written to Isabella, but not yet received a line in answer. She had to think of Emma as Felix's wife; and Felix—what had he thought, what had he felt when he returned and found her gone?—had she done well to go away?—could he find a lasting happiness at Emma's side?—and had she been right in depriving him of the friend who might have afforded him aid and consolation in hours of sorrow? Oh! she could have hated herself, for wanting to be more to him than a friend and sister! She should have warned him, with loud and urging voice, of his danger in binding his existence to that of a vain, false woman—she should have borne with him, when he did not hear the warning voice—she should have stayed with him, as she could not save him, to console him in future. Oh! how little had her beloved foster-mother known her selfish heart, when she called her, so often, her son's guardian angel!—how little did she suspect for what a selfish passion she was sowing the seed in her bosom, when, for many years, she unrolled before the eye of her fancy, the pictures of a future quiet domestic happiness, in which Felix, her be-

loved Felix, was the principal figure. And now she was far from him, many hundred miles away from him! He could see her no more! He thought of her no more! All his feelings were exhausted upon another; and this other!—

Thus her poor heart tormented itself by day and by night, and without any one suspecting aught of it, except that her father from time to time fixed a sharp, scrutinizing look upon her, and Guasha's eyes often followed her with an expression of pity, and filled with tears when she saw her young mistress weeping. But before all, she endeavored to conceal her grief from the shrewd and officious Nanny, who sought to divert her thoughts by a thousand relations of incidents from her checkered life.

Meanwhile summer had come, and a dull and sultry atmosphere pervaded the steppes; unwholesome vapors rose up from the morasses, which, in the hot season, stretch along the shores of the Cuban to the breadth of a quarter of a mile. A malignant epidemic crept through the camp and filled the hospitals, so that hardly any room was left for the wounded, who were almost daily brought back from the expeditions across the river and into the mountains.

Heloise, too, was but slightly protected against the burning heat of the steppes, by the thin wooden walls of her room; and the defects of her hastily collected establishment afforded her but few means of refreshment. Yet it was in vain that the count had several times proposed to her to go to Pjatigorsk, or one of the Russian watering-places of Caucasia, where she would find more convenient accommodations, and society suited to her rank, among the noble families who were wont to repair there during this season. She would remain with her father, this was her firm determination, for, she said, for what else had she left Germany and all that was so dear to her?

And, indeed, she had had occasion enough to ask herself with a deep sigh: "what was she here for?" Her domestic life, full of empty show, without meaning and dignity, had become more and more irksome to her. Even her visits to the camp, as soon as they lost, with their novelty, the charm of excitement, had grown more painful than pleasing to her. She believed she saw, plainly enough, in the countenances of the soldiers, an expression of sullen discontent. There were among them many vagabonds and strollers, to whom this war afforded little opportunity for spoil, but there were also many worthy young peasants, for whom parents and wives were weeping at home. And for these they were, indeed, as dead, for, in the sight of the Russian peasant, the Caucasus is nothing but an open grave; it is for the military what Siberia is for the civilian—the return from it is difficult and improbable. There were also many Polish noblemen among the army, who, after having struggled desperately and vainly for their own liberty, were now forced here to aid in undermining that of another people. Only the Cernomorzians appeared to carry on the war joyfully, and with good reason, for for them it could be called a war of defence.

And if our heroine looked around among the officers, how many coarse, vicious faces met her eye! The idea often entered her head, that the Caucasian army must be a kind of penitentiary, a means of purgation for noble families to rid themselves of refractory sons and wards, and for the government to remove dangerous subjects—so wildly and shamelessly did depravity look out from under the deceptive mantle of a discipline which was almost cruelly severe. Of course only the higher and better educated of the officers approached her, but here too she was brought in contact with much that was painful to her. Could she help remembering, in the midst of the polite speeches of yon brave colonel, who was formerly commandant of Fort Jekaterinodar, what Nanny had told her

of the shameless extortions and frauds which he had practised, and how he had let the unfortunate soldiers starve on mouldy bread and putrid meat, until her father, who had his eye every where, had come to the head of the army? Could she look at that young captain, who had a taste for literature, and translated novels from the German, without thinking of the poor soldier whom, the other day, in a fit of very excusable passion, because he had not scoured his buttons bright enough, he gave so violent a blow over the head, that the unfortunate man was prostrated by it, and had to be taken to the hospital, because the officer—who, it is true, was only inflicting a lawful punishment—had accidentally struck his temple?

All this induced Heloise to make her rides less and less frequent; yet also at home but few attractions were offered her. Of books she was entirely destitute; even materials for needlework could only be obtained with much trouble. The commandant had humbly surrendered, with the governess, without whom he had no use for it, a piano—but little could be done with the miserable instrument; neither were any notes to be had. The general, indeed, dispatched a courier to Taganrog for every thing that she needed, that he was aware of; but, on the one hand, she herself recoiled from this waste of human property and human strength; and, on the other, she was ashamed to trouble her father with requests for things which seemed trifling and insignificant here, in the face of gigantic scenes of nature—on this stage, where the scale which contained hundreds of fresh, vigorous, young lives, daily flew up into the air. And if *she* could not but look at them in this light, what must they be to him who held the scales in his own iron hand, heedless, as Heloise often felt with horror, how many of these plebeian human weights he threw into them, when they were intended to balance some plan of operation that was once made. And she herself, in the continual excitement in which she was kept by the vast drama which

was being acted around her, felt but little inclination for occupation.

For what, then, was she here? Her father, she felt but too plainly, had no need of her. In his breast, so full of ambition, zeal, thirst for glory and power, so overflowing with contempt of mankind, there was but a small space for her left: too small to contain the immeasurable love which she had borne towards him. What could she do for him? for him who seemed to know no other wish, no other aim, than to gain a new ground in the midst of the hated enemy, to erect a new fortification on his mountains, in defiance of his gun and arrow shots, and surrounded by the wounded and dying. She often thought of the sutler's tent, with which Rosen had threatened her, and how she would feel so much happier in it, cooking and washing for her father, than now, in her present empty, stylish, superfluous existence!

And alas, she could aid and do good to no one! In the beginning she had often summoned courage, and spoken a word to her father, who was always so kind to her, to put a stop to the cruelly-severe discipline practised against thoughtless transgressors or recaptured deserters. She herself, in the halo with which her father had surrounded her, would have known but little about these things, had not Nanny's frankness and kindheartedness directed her attention to the barbarous punishments which her father ordered; not without cutting remarks about Russian barbarity, and how those foreigners who had served in the Russian army, had the reputation of being still more inhuman than the Russians themselves. But her requests had never yet been of any avail; her father had always silenced her, as defective education pacifies children, by agreeing to all she said and promising every thing, without a thought of keeping the promise. But if she would not be put off in that way, and persisted in her entreaties, he would cast upon her a look, the severity of

which was much more terrible to her than another's anger would have been, and with a cuttingly-cold politeness, which was still more terrible to her than his look, he informed her that there were certain things in which men alone had a voice.

In order to employ her time usefully, she had, since her arrival, taken lessons in Russian of Mademoiselle Kalinoffska, and, by diligence and application, had, in a short time, made astonishing progress. She had the satisfaction of winning great praise for this from her father, who was highly pleased with any proof of energy. Besides this, she had written down, from Guasha's lips, a vocabulary of the Circassian language, and, with the help of Nanny and Mademoiselle Kalinoffska, had learnt from her a great deal about her people and its chivalresque customs. The beautiful girl, with her queen-like deportment and her melancholy eyes, excited Heloise's deepest sympathy. She offered to buy her and give her her liberty, and send her back beyond the Cuban, from where she could easily find her way to her home; for she belonged to the neighboring tribes of Shapzucks. But Guasha did not wish to return now. Passionately as she loved her mountains, she had also attached herself with a kind of affectionate impetuosity to her new beautiful mistress. Then too, she had no more a paternal roof. Over her head the fierce Cossacks had burnt down the homestead in which she had grown up, to which she was bound by so many fond reminiscences. Before her eyes her struggling father had been cut down—and her mother, her youthful sisters-in-law, borne away to slavery, no one could tell her where. Her brothers, heroes famed among their people, had fallen before, fighting for their native fireside; her sisters, all older than she, had, many years before, been sent by their father to Constantinople to be sold. Theirs was the fortunate, envied lot. Their father had received many thousand *piastres* from the Turkish merchant who came

one day, when she was still a child, from Anapa, where his ship lay, to their village, to pick out the most beautiful girls, and take them to Stamboul, where, on account of their origin, he might demand a double price for them. She still saw her sisters, how their eyes sparkled at the splendid dresses and brilliant jewels which the merchant gave them, to put them in good spirits—and how the others envied them. For a place in a Turkish harem is the height of the ambition of a Circassian maiden. Those that are beautiful and well-formed may hope for an idle careless life, full of sensual pleasures, among the wealthy Turks, to whom, in all cases, the Circassian looks up with a sort of awe. Bathing, adorning themselves, eating *pasta* and drinking *sherbet*, and between these a lounge on soft cushions—such is the life which those lead who find grace in the eyes of their master. But even those, whose humble lot it is to remain attendants, find this easy, compared with the life of hard drudgery to which they are brought up, and from which no marriage with one of their countrymen would have brought them release. For the Circassian woman, in marrying, only changes masters, and, besides, gives up, with her maidenhood, the only prerogatives of her sex which are valid among her people.

Guasha, although she considered her sisters' lot a happy one, did not herself shun labor. Heloise knew that she was the daughter of an influential *Work*, as the Circassians—or *Uzdene*, as the Tartars call a nobleman. She therefore gave her only easy duties to perform: she had to make her mistress's bed, to sew for her, to braid her hair in the many skilful plaits of her country. But Guasha's activity was not satisfied with this—the fence around the court was out of order; immediately Guasha procured some boards and nails, and commenced repairing it. Some of the rooms were not of the cleanest; Guasha soon came with brushes and a pail of white paint, which she had prepared herself, and covered the soiled

woodwork with it. Every *Pshi's* daughter, she said, that is, every princess, did that in her country. However, she preferred the more delicate domestic duties, and her skill in weaving, tailoring, shoemaking, and all kinds of tapestry-work—things in which, in a country where there are no mechanics but workers in iron and gold, every woman is more or less experienced—was of much use to Heloise and Nanny also here, where such trades were, if at all, only carried on in the most primitive manner.

If Guasha surpassed her countrywomen in these things, she was before them in others also. In the neighborhood of her *Aula*—so the Circassian villages are called—there was a mosque, and in it a Wallachian kept a school for boys and girls during the summer. Here Guasha had learnt to read the Turkish pretty fluently, and to write something besides her name in the same language. Hence, too, she thought a great deal of the rites of the Mahometan religion, repeating the prayers prescribed by it with tolerable regularity, and never neglecting to wash herself before doing so. She was, however, always very cleanly, and never suffered the "princess's evil"* to make its appearance on her. But with all this, she also, like most of her countrymen, observed the Christian Sabbath, by complete rest, and showed a particular veneration for the holy images which the Russian family, whom Heloise had so innocently turned out, had left fastened into the corners of the rooms, but particularly for Nanny's little image of the Virgin, which she decorated with flowers, and called *Merem*. During a thunderstorm she would pray silently, and seemed to consider the God who thundered as entirely different from the God of whom the Koran speaks.

* So the Circassians, with a euphemism worthy of a more civilized nation, term a doubtful eruption which is frequently found among the women, particularly those of the higher classes.

She also wore a little silver cross, hanging to a chain, and hidden in her bosom, which she used to adore in secret, and with many tears. She took a lively interest in all that passed in the camp, or any thing else that was within her reach on the stage of war. Nanny was of the opinion that she kept up a constant intercourse with some of her countrymen, who, taken captive by the Russians, instead of suffering themselves to be sent to the interior, had enlisted in the Cuban army, doubtless only there to watch an opportunity to return to their native mountains.

Whenever, as often happened, a band of Circassians crossed the Cuban under shelter of a dark night, attacked the posts stationed on the banks, and cut down the unsuspecting Cossacks; or a handful of bold adventurers, pushing, recklessly, straight through the valley, broke by night into one of the villages at the foot of the northern mountain-wall, spoiling and destroying, and carrying away women and children with the flocks, as booty: in such cases Guasha was usually the first to bring the news next morning with ill-concealed joy. How many such feats could she relate, with sparkling eyes, of her brothers. The eldest had already carried off a whole flock when he was hardly fourteen years old; and how proud did the idea make her, that her eldest sister-in-law, his wife—a fair, proud, chieftain's daughter—had, on account of this exploit, preferred her brother to a much more noble suitor, because, as she said, the cattle of the Czernomorzians could graze in peace before the eyes of the latter. On such an occasion Guasha would then explain to Heloise, in her broken Russian, what a great condescension it was, when a prince gave his daughter to a mere nobleman; and that this only happened if the nobleman was a good Mahometan, as her brother Ali Karsis had been, and could pay such an enormous price as he had done. "But a man," she added and sighed deeply, "whether he be a prince or only a

nobleman, may never, among my people, debase himself so much as to marry below his rank."

Sometimes Heloise, accompanied by Guasha, would ascend the watchtower of the fortress, from which she could overlook a portion of the martial theatre. Before her, only separated from the town by a broad morass, to which thickly-growing brush gave an emerald-green color, the Cuban wound its way in a thousand bends and with a clear, impetuous current, forced, by the dryness of the season, into a narrow bed, while in winter innumerable mountain-streams supplied it with rich nourishment. Behind her, and closely surrounding her, were the barracks and walls of the fort—the latter in their terrible dress of artillery and armed men; beyond these, the humble houses of the little town—farther back, and as far as her eye reached, the flat northern wall of the Cuban valley, which on the right was only covered with woods, and on the left scattered over with villages, fields, and meadows, on which flocks were grazing. All this was lovely in its way, but far less picturesque than the side-views, up and down the rich luxurious valley. What a prospect did the western lowland present, with its thousands of snow-white tents, and its restless and never-slumbering activity. The troops drilling, the messengers arriving from every side in full gallop, the manifold business going on here and there, entirely incomprehensible to the uninitiated, and, with all this the heavy artillery with its mysterious power, which was ranged along the nearer declivities: this imposing spectacle might well intimidate even the reckless bravery of the foolhardy Circassians.

Then, close by the river, and on its banks, the singular watch-houses of the Cossacks: three poles of equal immense height set up close together in a triangle, and on them a covered nest, from which the bearded, handsome Czernomorzian peers out with sharp-seeing eye, like an eagle; for the

moment only to guard the bank, so as to give the alarm at any approach of the enemy, but willingly taking advantage of the opportunity of discovering any spot where to hunt for booty when he is off guard, and it is his turn to make the attack. For the old Zaporoguean was always akin to the Circassian in disposition as well as in race. His office of border-guard has never satisfied him, and during the half century that he has lived on the Caucasus, he has thought not to be able to guard the northern shore of the Cuban, without gathering spoil on the southern one.

From these objects, Heloise let her eye wander beyond the stream. In the East, in the country of the Psadugs, things looked peaceable enough. Close by the water, exactly opposite to Fort Jekaterinodar, at the mouth of the little river which separated the domain of the Psadugs from that of the Shapzucks, lay a small town, which the chieftain of the country, who resided there, kept in strict order, from fear of the Russians. But now she looked farther on, to the right. Her eye remained fixed, as if by magic, on the enchanted scene. Broad and luxuriant, amid the roar of artillery and the clashing of swords, in smiling beauty, the rich plain lay stretched out before her, intersected by innumerable, sparkling bands of silver, wild mountain-torrents, which rush in restless haste from the dark mysterious forests right behind, through the meadows, as if they would escape from the awful power of the mountain-spirit, who dwells and reigns on those immeasurable, gigantic heights, his shoulders clothed with the primitive forests of creation, his head with the eternal snows. Her father's telescope bore Heloise's eye to a great distance; beyond the morasses of the Cuban, she saw the many-colored garments of the reapers, who were gathering in the indispensable harvest, with a guard and arms and horses constantly in readiness. Small two-wheeled cars, drawn by oxen, were waiting to convey the grain to mountain

hollows, where it would be in safety. Many a little village, built in a circle, so that the flocks might be safe in the centre, still stood untouched on the higher plateaux, but much more numerous were the smoking ruins among the woods on the mountain side. Heloise hardly dared look at Guasha, the poor orphan, who sat beside her, bathed in tears; for the smoke of her native *Aula* too had thus risen up from among the woods, when she, with her hands tied, hurried on by a merciless whip, was being led from the Ubin valley to the Cuban.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CIRCASSIANS.

Heloise's interest in this war, which in the beginning, very naturally, had been on the side on which her father occupied so prominent a station, had, by degrees, almost unknown to herself, been transferred to the oppressed enemy, who was defending, against a force far exceeding his own, his right to man's best possession, Liberty. Until now she had looked upon the mountaineers as mere robbers—as a race leading a savage, lawless life, to conquer and tame which was the interest of humanity and civilization. Her father himself, although he never spoke of the warlike inhabitants of the Caucasus otherwise than as rebels, had, by occasional relations of his adventures among them, given her another idea. For the count had not only been for many years stationed in Grusinia and Imeretia—and the inhabitants of these provinces and the border-neighbors of Azra still trembled at the sound of his terrible name—but he had also several times made the perilous journey over the two army-routes which lead through the Caucasian Isthmus; partly in order to superintend the building of the fortifications which alone can render these roads somewhat safe, partly for the purpose of various life-endangering excursions, to extract, in the name of the emperor, submission from the warlike mountain tribes by diplomatic cunning, or enforce it from the less resistant inhabitants of the Kabarda. Perfectly familiar with the Turkish language, which is acquired by most of the chieftains, ac-

quainted with the customs and prejudices of the different tribes, and besides this, possessing, with his iron will, a peculiar pliableness and fascination, when an object once taken in view was to be gained, he seemed particularly capacitated for an effective intercourse with the latter.

However, his attempts had led to many a wild adventure, some of which seem to have been prevented from terminating fatally, only by a miracle. But nowhere, whether among the wild Lesghians, or among the yet unconquered inhabitants of the north-western range, was he without a *Konack* or host, more than one of which, in consequence of the boundless arrogance with which, even where his emperor's power was not recognized, he usurped a monarch's rights in his name, had only saved him from the wrath of the indignant nobles at the risk of his own life. From Anapa to the Tshetshenzians no name was so hated as his, and yet, as he himself acknowledged, he might have travelled, at any time, unharmed through most parts of the mountain region, delivered by one *Konack* to the other. And should not Heloise honor such a virtue?

She was still more favorably inclined towards the struggling Circassians by observations which now and then escaped the younger officers. Count Dabanoff particularly—a generous nature, but who treated every thing, service excepted, with a sort of playful superiority—was inexhaustible in sarcastic remarks on the humanity of this war, and the reasonableness of the demands of his government.

"The fools," he would say, showing her a paper which contained the so-called "Declaration of Independence" of the Circassians; "their princes might have received the order of St. Vladimir, and had their sons and daughters educated in imperial military schools and noble ladies' institutions. Now they have lost that privilege." Or he would ask her, with perfect gravity, to allow him to read her, from

the St. Petersburg papers, the report of a brilliant victory over the mountaineers, which, to be sure, had been fought with their own arms, but of which they had not yet received the intelligence here in the camp. Or sometimes, in a fit of enthusiasm, he would betray the wish to exchange his rich uniform, which pressed in his waist and made it difficult for him to breathe, for the picturesque, Oriental armor of the Circassians; or that he might give all his estates, scattered over the whole of Russia, for one of their nests among the rocks, so as to feel for once the sensations of a free man. A severe glance from the commander often checked him, and kept the enthusiasm of many a young officer within bounds. But the impression was not lost on Heloise.

She often felt, too, as if the passions which were so wildly and powerfully conflicting around her, were beneficial to her; as if the game which was being played close beside her taught her to bear her own small, mistaken destiny with more submission. For what was the weal or woe of one young girl, where the die was cast for the fate of nations?

The combat had lasted half a century already, between the Caucasian nations, and the Russians, who had continued to approach nearer and nearer to them. As long as the Tartars of the Crimea and the tribes on the Caspian Sea were independent powers, they served, in a measure, as conductors for the Russians and Caucasians, who both were constantly engaged in hostilities with those nations, although the latter acknowledged a certain supremacy of the *Khan* of the Crimea, and, in olden times, for a number of years, had to pay the humiliating tribute of their most beautiful young men and maidens. In fact, the warlike shepherd-tribes of the Caucasus, in whom the most intrepid valor is singularly blended with Oriental indolence, have, from the first, misunderstood the voice of a kind nature, which has crowded them and their chain of invincible rocky fortresses,

between two seas, one of which could serve their still slumbering commercial spirit as an entrance from Europe, the other from Asia. On the North and East, they were troubled by the Tartar hordes, on the South by the Turks and Persians. Catharine's fame was spread far and wide; her name still shone bright at a distance, when the Prince of the Little Kabarda, Korina Kantshogin, the builder of Mosdock, who was married to the daughter of an Imeretian Czar, adopted the Greek religion, and voluntarily swore allegiance to the Russian sceptre. This step of one of their most potent chieftains—it took place in the year 1759—roused the indignation of the proud Circassian princes; for as yet they were perfectly independent, and considered their liberty their best treasure—from the above-mentioned tribute to the Tartars, which, however, concerned only the north-western mountain-tribes, they had freed themselves by their arms. half a century before. The supremacy of the Sultan was only recognized as that of the head of their religion. Bloody feuds between the mountain Circassians and the Kabardines, and among the princes of the former, broke up the country, and opened the gates of the Caucasus to the ambition and intrigues of Russia. For more than ten years, it is true, during which time, by stratagem and force, its foothold in the neighboring Crimea was growing more and more firm, the latter looked on with much satisfaction while the noblest powers of its victims were destroying themselves. But when, during the war with the Turks, the Russians sent, in the year 1771, an army commanded by General Medem, against the Caucasian tribes, the joint forces of both highlanders and lowlanders were hardly able to resist them. But the subjection of the latter did not, for the moment, seem to be in the interest of the Russian cabinet: the independence of the Crimea and the Tartar tribes of the Cuban—which term comprised also the Circassians—had been expressly recognized in the peace of Kutshuk Kainardshi, as

a barricade for and against the Porte; and even when Catharine, some years later, with one of those despotic grasps, the shameless audacity of which awed Europe instead of shocking it, possessed herself of the Crimea, the inhabitants of the Caucasus remained unnoticed; and, in the peace of Jassy, the river Cuban was solemnly declared the boundary of the Russian empire, and the chivalrous race of the Zaporogueans, Cossacks from the banks of the Dnieper, removed to the northern shore of the Cuban, there to protect the subjects of the empress from the rapacious assaults of the mountaineers.

However, since a part of the eastern regions of the Caucasian Isthmus had, by the submission of the Czar Heraclius, become a province under the protection of Russia, jealousy had sprung up in the breasts of the free and warlike people who inhabit the mountains on the Black Sea, and the open, semicircular valley of the Cuban—a feeling which was fully shared by the tribes of the Kabarda, i. e., the broad flourishing plateau which, descending towards the East from the mountains, between the giant peaks of the Elberus and the Kasbeck, stretches out between the Kuma and the Terek. For that is the actual cradle of Circassian heroes. This feeling was fostered partly by religious fanaticism, partly by the policy of the Porte, which, erecting several forts along the shores of the Black Sea, seemed to guard them more anxiously than ever, and even stationed a Pasha at Anapa; although otherwise it does not seem to have laid claim to any rights of sovereignty. The restored peace did not prevent the continuation of a petty war on the Cuban and Terek rivers.

At the commencement of our century, Russia, by its incorporation of Georgia and Imeretia, set its foot also over the southern barrier between Europe and Asia, and found itself, in the course of the next twenty-five years, by two fortunate wars, in possession of all the countries east and south of the Caucasian mountains. It was now of the utmost importance

to the Russians to gain a safe passage through their provinces, which could only be obtained by subduing the mountain-tribes themselves. The broad military route which leads over Mosdok to Tiflis through the narrow pass of Wladikaukas, although scattered over with fortresses, was continually exposed to the assaults of the highlanders, who, after having satisfied their rapacity, were borne off by their fleet horses to defiles in the mountains, inaccessible to the pursuers. No traveller, no transport of goods or money, was safe from them without a strong military guard. Amicable measures were not left untried. The Duke of Richelieu, the creator of New Russia, endeavored to reconcile the minds of the tribes on the Black Sea by entering into commercial relations with them, and to win the chieftains over to Russian interests by presents. But with small success. The few princes who saw the good of their subjects in a peaceable connection with their so much stronger Russian neighbors, were regarded by their countrymen with suspicion; and the venerable prince of Pshat, Indar Oglu Mehmet, with his brave sons, who were universally acknowledged to belong to the noblest of the nation, had to struggle, for years, even after they had given up all such hopes, with the firmly-rooted suspicion of their friends, and the reproaches of their enemies.

With much greater success, by similar means, and by the splendor of stars, *roubles*, and advancements in rank, several of the princes and nobles among the inhabitants of the eastern side of the mountain, were brought to resign their wild independence. Some of them were persuaded to enter into Russian service, others submitted to the indignity of only being allowed to wear arms on reception of a permit; others again were induced to have their sons educated at the Lyceum at Sympheropolis, or at one of the military schools at St. Petersburg, as pledges of their allegiance. Villages of

Russian colonists built along the Terek road—even German and Swiss settlements among them—or on the rivers which flow from the mountains to the Caspian Sea, were to aid, by their influence, in taming the wild character of the natives. But time only can make this true seed of civilization spring up, and, in this case, an early harvest could be the less expected, as the hands of unprincipled functionaries undermined it, and, by forcible subjection, made the Russian name an object of aversion. Besides this, those princes who swore the Russian oath of allegiance, because they saw no means of avoiding it, only changed enemies. For wherever the Russian double-eagle spread its wings, the terrible highlander considered himself on the enemy's ground; like lightning he would suddenly break into the villages, and bear off flocks and helpless inhabitants to the mountains—whether the latter were Russians or Circassians. There was no peace for the plains, before the mountains too were subject to the Russian sceptre.

No one, therefore, could reasonably blame Russia, when, in the peace of Adrianople, policy induced it to extort from the vanquished Turks, the eastern coast of the Black Sea, and the southern and western shores of the Cuban. This compromise certainly gave the Russian cabinet a legal authorization for subduing the mountaineers. But who had given the Sultan the right to resign them? Like wild-fire the rumor of the fourth article in the treaty of Adrianople, which made them Russian subjects, spread around in the mountains, and where it went, it struck and ignited. The Shapzucks, who, in the smaller border-wars, had for centuries ever remained unvanquished, heard it with angry surprise; the heroic Notachaizes, the monarchs of the sea-shore, with no less indignation. In the warlike Abazaks, whose situation on the north-eastern declivity of the mountains protected them less effectually from the attacks of the powerful Muscovites, it

awakened a greater concern. Enough, in the eyes of all Europe, that gigantic ridge, on whose many thousand shelves, in whose innumerable clefts and defiles a reckless, unsubdued race had, for ages past, built its homesteads in perfect liberty, became, in the year 1830, the centre of a Russian province. So it could be seen on every Russian map, so it was proved by the imperial troops, who, since then, came thither for new campaigns, building strongholds on the mountains, amid the balls of the Circassians, who were firing upon them from the woods, and securing the harbors of the sea-coast by new castles and fortresses.

But, again—who gave the Sultan, whom they reverenced as the head of the Faithful, but not as a sovereign, the right to yield them up, to give them away like purchased slaves, or prisoners won in war? What was the Muscovite emperor, the *Kjaur*, to them? Their burning eyes glanced death and destruction, their swords clashed revenge. But jealousy and paltry quarrels among themselves, divided the princes. In childish strife about a yoke of oxen or a herd of cattle, the noble blood was spilt, which ought to have defended the Cuban, and guarded the coasts.

It was an intrepid stranger, an Englishman, who, grudging the Russian the overland route to India, his nation's usurped inheritance, at last succeeded in uniting the southern mountain-tribes to one people. Several languages, different in root and sound, of obscure origin, like their enmities, carried on from generation to generation, and, like these, ancient and singular, had until now divided them: now they were united by one glowing sentiment—that of hatred against the Muscovite—under the green banner which Beg Daoud* held up before them—green like their mountains, green like the color of Mecca, the sanctuary of their faith. A gigantic wall

* As the Circassians call Mr. David Urquhardt.

guarded their liberty. The enemy could only advance step by step, and gain the smallest advantages only by ineffable sacrifices. The garrisons of the forts were like prisoners, balls and arrows awaited those who were sent out to cut the necessary wood, or to procure provisions, when the ships with consignments, or the supplies from the Cuban, were delayed too long. The cattle at the foot of the rocks on which the strongholds were built, could only graze with a military guard. In Anapa, where the water within the fort was unfit for drinking, and the inhabitants had to be supplied from a well some distance off, it could only be obtained under escort of a cannon. Professor Nordmann, who landed at Ghelendshik, under Russian protection, for the purpose of botanizing, could hardly carry out his purpose, even with a guard of 150 men, a cannon, and a pack of hounds to trace out the Circassians who might be hidden in the woods.

Still, the provinces on the shore, which were defended by so many fortifications, seemed the least dangerous to the Russians, so that the army moved to and fro mostly on the sea-shore. More bloody conflicts were afforded by the expeditions from the Cuban to the coast through the valleys of the Abun, the Aduchum, or others of the broad mountain-passes, which were only undertaken by considerable forces. From behind and before, on three or four sides at once, armed men would rush out, as if by magic, from the thick forests and hidden clefts, striking about them with sharp swords; mostly only the twentieth part of the attacked in number, and yet, by skill, the quickness of lightning, and a death-defying bravery, always retaining the advantage. No journal gives an accurate report of the feats of that heroic race, and history will have only a few traits for the composition of the picture which she has to draw of them. But these are enough to make it a nation of heroes, such as is rarely shown by any period in historical antiquity, and then only in those where the struggle

for one of the best treasures of mankind was concerned. The intrepidity with which, frequently, a splendidly-armed noble, on a white horse, to make himself the more conspicuous, would approach one of the Russian forts to within range of the artillery, and, amid the balls of the enemy, would challenge them to come out and try their skill in single combat, only to excite the admiration of his more distant comrades, ought to be termed foolhardiness. But the candor of some Russian reporters has also informed us of nobler traits of heroism.

For the narratives of Bell and several other European travellers—mortal enemies of the Russian name—which were mostly gathered from the lips of the Circassians themselves, too often bear the stamp of the fabulous, to be easily credited; while their praises from the lips of their enemies may be relied on, and we cannot doubt the cause for the esteem with which the latter regard them—often much against their will.

The Shapzuks and Notachaizes, who, up to the period in which our tale falls, had been the foremost in carrying on the war, have found in nature itself a powerful protector, and, in our day, even a deliverer. For the north-western part of the Caucasus, at that time the theatre of war, seems now to have been given up by the Russians. But among the no less warlike Abazaks, the union against the Muscovites, whom they also looked upon with burning hatred, met with greater difficulties, and but few princes, particularly among those of the eastern regions, were willing to take an oath which exposed them and theirs to the vengeance of a powerful enemy, against whom their brethren beyond the mountains were protected by the latter. The power of the chieftains over their subjects is much greater in this part of the country than among the western highlands, where most nobles and even many a warlike, free peasant, consider the prince as their equal. It was therefore important to the Russians here to

gain the princes, as in the other case the people, to their side. On the other side of the mountains the garrison of the forts had been commanded not to fire at the passing peasants, but only to keep their eye on the leaders and nobles. Here the princes and higher classes were importuned, threats and promises interwoven, to induce them to at least a nominal submission, and one artfully stirred up against the other, in order to gain, by envy and the exciting of their ignoble passions, what their pride and their thirst for liberty denied the emperor. The example of the Kabarda was held up, where the Russians had already succeeded so far as to be able to levy troops with regular, for the present very high, pay, and form entire Circassian regiments, which, notwithstanding the innumerable deserters, were employed with success against their wilder countrymen, the Tshetshenzians and Lesghians. There were nobles, however, and not a few, who had followed the general example with aversion, but there was also no lack of traitors among the higher classes, who, for cash, would transmit to the Russian commander the heads of some of his opponents. On the whole, however, the voice of this portion of the people was against the Muscovite, their hereditary enemy, and all that had so far been obtained from the princes of Psadug, Hatukwoi, and Temigui, whose territory touches the Cuban on the north, to the east of the Shapzuks, and of Machosh, close by the latter province, was the promise to keep themselves quiet, and not to aid the highlanders.

The Abazaks, spread out over the north-eastern declivity of the range, had not even promised as much as that. A powerful excitement reigned in their country. In large national assemblies they deliberated whether, without rushing headlong to destruction, they might follow their inclinations, and unite in the same cause with their brethren beyond

the mountains. The messages of the Russian commander-in-chief were received with forced politeness, but the speeches of the Shapzuk deputies listened to with much more interest; not without the hope that while they were hesitating, the Sultan or England might take their part, and thus put the welcome arms into their hands.

CHAPTER XVI.

A CIRCASSIAN PRINCE.

Among the principal men of Abazak there were two in particular, whom Count Staden wished to secure, as, in case they were gained over to the Russian interest, he could count on their being followed not only by the whole of Abazak, but also the adjoining provinces. For their influence was considerable, and their example could hardly be without the most important consequences.

One of these two was Serasker Oglu Mehmet, the Ulysses of Circassia; a man, small in body, lame, and nearly deaf, but with a mind so surpassing, a shrewdness so penetrating, that even in a country where physical heroism is valued above every thing, his authority was not exceeded by that of any other chieftain. Since the peace of Adrianople he had kept up an apparent friendship with the Russians, and was personally acquainted with several of their generals, none of whom, however, trusted him entirely.

The other, still young, and of uncommon beauty, might well have been called the Achilles of Circassia. His name was Gheri Oglu Mansur, to which his heroic deeds had added the term of Arslan, or lion, so that the Russians only knew him by the name of Prince Mansur Arslan. As this young hero has more to do with our story than his countryman Mehmet, it seems appropriate to look at him closely on this his introduction.

Prince Mansur Arslan was the great-grandson of the builder of Mosdok, the same Korina Kantshogin, who, in the

second half of the last century, had voluntarily surrendered himself to Catharine's sceptre. This step, as well as his adopting the Christian religion, which he did from love for his Imeretian wife, displeased several of his sons, among whom was Mansur's grandfather, who went to the mountains, and, by his martial exploits, soon gained great influence over the brave inhabitants of Abazak and Ubuk. Mansur's father, however, had remained with his grandfather, who married him, while he was still very young, to a princess of Mingrelia. This woman, of distinguished beauty, and with a mind such as had probably animated no Oriental princess since the days of her grandmother and namesake Tamar, and, with all this, a Christian full of glowing zeal, who had only been induced to a marriage which led her among infidels, by the hope of winning souls for her Saviour, saw with horror, that her husband, immediately upon his grandfather's death, which took place soon after, adopted the Mahometan religion, and, like his father, retired to the mountains, where the hated Muscovites, whose insolent treatment of his property had often roused his indignation, had not yet gained any influence. All the sons which she had borne to her husband grieved her by following his example, and the oldest at last turned from her entirely, and went to the Turks to serve under the Sultan.

Only the youngest, Mansur, her tears and supplications had obtained from her husband, and she could teach him in her bedchamber, and when he could hardly lisp the words after her, to pray to the Saviour and the Virgin. But no entreaties, no resistance could deter Prince Gheri from consigning young Mansur, like his brothers, when he had reached his fifth year, after the fashion of the Circassians, to the care of an *Atalik* or foster-father, who was to bring him up to manhood. For, according to an ancient, unnatural custom, which, strange to say, is common to both the hot-blooded Orientals and the heroes of old Iceland, no Circassian father

or mother may educate their sons themselves. Parental love might crush the germ of the hero in the tender child, and render him effeminate. The boy therefore, mostly even before he is weaned from his mother's breast, is put under the care of another brave man, who makes a hero of him, and whose wife is often his nurse. What though all tender feelings are thus stifled in the birth, what though the holiest family-ties are thus rent asunder—the manly virtues which adorn the Circassian hero, and let him regard martial fame as the highest treasure, and bold, daring, predatory skill as the most praiseworthy of all qualities, are far better developed under the care of a worthy *Atalik*. The latter also takes a certain responsibility for the life of his charge; and when at length he brings him home as a youth who has already borne away many a head of cattle from a nocturnal attack, and has wet his sword with many a drop of blood—whether it be Russian or that of a hostile tribe—clad in brilliant armor, which, if the *Atalik's* means allow it, is a present from the latter, he remains during the rest of his life the honored friend of the family, and in matters of importance, no step is taken without his advice.

After ten long years of sad yearning, poor Tamar too, who had spent that time mostly with her father—an hereditary Czar of Mingrelia, and subject to the Russian sceptre, had the unspeakable joy of embracing her son once more. Beautiful as a girl, as she herself had been when she first left her native land, but vigorous as a hero, he stood before her. Trembling, she led him to her chamber, and bade him kneel before the image of the Virgin, to whom she herself sent up a prayer with fervent devotion. But Mansur stood by her side in embarrassment. True, he had borne the little golden cross which she had given him in parting, constantly on his heart, as a remembrance of her, but in the land of the Shapzuks, where he had been brought up, he had only occasion-

ally seen persons praying in the mosque, or one or the other worshipping fire, water, or stones. What other traces of Christian rites had been retained there—for, for centuries past, the altars of the cross have been levelled—he had not even recognized as remains of his mother's religion; so much had time disfigured them. However, faithful to her parting admonitions, he had often shown the golden cross which she had given him on his going among infidels—not without the hope that God might work a miracle by this young apostle—to the daughters of the house, and told them of its sanctity; on which the youngest, a lovely child, who was devotedly attached to him, had begged him to give her also a little cross, which she ever after worshipped.

But Tamar's days now grew brighter. It was the question whether Mansur should receive his farther education in Constantinople, or St. Petersburg. General Yermoloff, who was endeavoring to win the favor of the Abazak chiefs, and succeeded in gaining Mansur's father, decided the matter. Mansur was educated in the cadet's-school in St. Petersburg, and took a part in the war with the Persians, under Yermoloff and Paskewitsh. During this time he had acquired a certain European culture, but no love for the Russians. After the peace, he had no difficulty in obtaining his dismission, in order to return to his home, for it was hoped that the rule of civilization had gained ground upon him enough to insure a beneficial result from his influence on friends and neighbors.

But Mansur, after throwing himself on his mother's breast, and edifying her by his piety, went to Constantinople, enlisted, like his brothers, in the Turkish army, and took a part in the unhappy war against the victorious Diebitsh. After the peace of Adrianople, which made him a subject of the Emperor Nicholas, he went to the Shapzuks, and devoted himself to the petty, but dangerous border-war, where he repaired his injured funds. For all the mathematics and geography, and

all the French which he had learnt at the imperial military school, could not make him forget the fruits of his early education—such as perfection in shooting, fencing, and riding, and adroitness and contempt of death in marauding—and nothing was more profitable than the sale of herds and prisoners of war, whether won in bloody combat or in an attack by night on some defenceless village. The mechanical religious rites to which he had become accustomed in St. Petersburg, had taught him no better.

His daring exploits, which were mostly crowned with success, soon made him the favorite of his people, and the dread of the enemy. To them he owed the name of Arslan. Once, however, they very nearly brought him to destruction. A band of Shapzuks, among them some of the most celebrated names of the country, were preparing to accomplish an extraordinary feat. They intended to surprise Stawropolis—the capital of Caucasia—by night, to punish the military governor, who had, some time ago, offended some of them. Mansur called this idea foolhardy, imprudent; for Stawropolis lies fifty or sixty German miles beyond the eastern bend of the Cuban, and to reach it, they would have to travel more than two hundred, the last half of them through a country inhabited by enemies. But a gentle hint from the lips of one of the warriors, that, from his former connection with the Muscovites, he had retained a certain partiality for them, induced him to take a part in this hazardous enterprise.

The band was but small: sixty with Arslan. How the reckless adventurers fought their way to Stawropolis, with a dozen hair-breadth escapes—how, many a time, they had to rely on the lightning-speed of their coursers—of this no details are known. Enough, that on the fifth day, at twilight, they stood before Stawropolis. They determined to await the night, under whose mantle alone they could hope to attack a garrison of ten times their number, with some

success. A thick wood in the neighborhood was to conceal them till then, and serve as a resting-place for their wearied limbs. But a Russian peasant had observed them, and had given notice of their presence to the commandant. Before they knew it, they found themselves surrounded by three times their number of Cossacks. At this sight, they swore to each other that none would surrender; that they would fight their way through the enemy, or die together. Their horses, which were grazing close by, had, for a short time, to serve as wall and breastworks for the combatants. They all discharged their muskets at once over the backs of the noble creatures; then, dashing away their pieces, they commenced a furious attack on the enemy with their swords, and the combat did not end until all the sixty faithful warriors were stretched lifeless on the battle-ground, with their trusty steeds beside them; and among them, and all around, the double number of Cossacks.

In two only of the Circassians life was not yet entirely extinct: one of these was Mansur Arslan. When he recovered his consciousness, he crept unnoticed among the bushes, where he lay for a long time helpless and half dead, until at length his youthfully strong constitution triumphed. In the greatest agony, and exposed to a thousand dangers, he dragged himself to the Cuban, and crossed the river clinging to a board, which served him for a raft, as he lay extended on it. Beyond the Cuban he found kind care, and aid to return to Abazak. Here he lay ill of his wounds a long time, during which his fond, prayerful mother, whom the news of his misfortune had called from a convent to which she had retired, did not stir from his bedside. On his final recovery, he kept himself quiet, making careful observations as to the most effectual means of rescuing his country without sacrificing the noblest blood, as in the senseless affair at Stawropolis. Yet it was just this adventure, which, in the considera-

tion of his countrymen, made him one of their greatest heroes. They gathered around him, they admired him more for this than for any of his former exploits. His influence, therefore, was great, and necessarily made him terrible to the Russians; for on his will alone did it seem to depend whether Abazak was to be at peace or at war with them. And on the other side, the connection in which he stood with his maternal relations in Mingrelia and Azra, made his influence dangerous also in these countries, which, though subject to the Russian crown, were by no means devoted to it.

It was on Prince Mansur Arslan, therefore, that Count Staden had fixed his eye particularly, when he requested the presence of the chiefs of Abazak and the Cuban at a conference in his camp. At the head of the latter was Psugui, Prince of Psadug, a country, the western boundary of which is a river that divides their territory from that of the Shapzuks, and which empties into the Cuban directly opposite Fort Jekaterinodar. This prince, who could muster six thousand men, had so far kept up a certain independence towards the Russians, and had not allowed any of their forts to be erected on his domain. His country was remarkable for flourishing villages, with rich gardens and meadows. His neighbors on the East and South-east, the princes of Temigui, Hatukwoi, and Machosh, were accustomed to depend upon him, as the most powerful among them. But he, whose situation exposed him to the sweeping grasp of Russia as much as theirs did them, thought necessary to lean on the Abazaks, whose lands, extended far along the mountain-ridge, bounded his on the South, and, in case of need, might serve him and his as a place of refuge, without which he felt himself entirely unable to resist the mighty intruders. Thus it seemed, before all, necessary to gain the leaders of Abazak, to insure success to a plan, in the execution of which, Count Staden

relied mainly on the influence which he was accustomed to exercise over all with whom he had personal intercourse.

His intention, namely, was, firstly—as the Russians had already gained considerable free land farther south, i. e., in Besni and the Kabarda, and had subdued their former lords—to induce also these independent princes of northern Circassia to sign a document, in which they declared themselves vassals of his emperor; and secondly, to draw from them, by stratagem and persuasion, their permission to enlist troops in their domains. There was nothing by which he might hope to win more favor from his government than by producing such a document. And with regard to the second point, a new recruiting from the freshest flower of the land itself, was made highly desirable, partly by the immense number of those who fell in the daily bloody battles and skirmishes, and partly by the dreadful mortality among those who became a prey to the climate, or withered away pent up in the forts, with the most unhealthy food.

To the urgent invitation, therefore, which was sent to the princes, and many of the most influential nobles, were added presents, such as must be welcome to the wealthiest Circassian: rich stuffs, arms, plate, &c., in great variety. An exchange of those Russian prisoners who had been sold as slaves to Abazak or the Cuban countries, was the reason *expressed* for the invitation. Serasker Oglu Mehmet excused himself on account of illness. Arslan, and with him the princes of the Cuban territories, besides numerous nobles from Abazak, accepted the invitation.

Heloise looked forward to their arrival with a lively curiosity. Her father had allowed her to drive, on the evening when he expected his guests, in her coach and six, and accompanied by her women, to a point at which he was to meet his guests, and there witness the reception.

About a mile east of Jekaterinodar a shallow place in the

river forms a sort of ford, by which the princes, with a numerous retinue—almost a hundred men—crossed. Their rich dresses, embroidered in gold and silver—their polished arms, sparkled dazzlingly in the light of the evening sun, and as they galloped along the valley on steeds, so graceful, so fiery and proud, and of such fairy lightness, that they seemed to have sprung from an enchanted world, the echo of their hoofs fell musically on Heloise's listening ear.

Now her father too, at the head of his staff, approached from the other side. It seemed as if he intended, by marks of distinction, greater than his guests could expect, to secure from the first a powerful ally in their flattered vanity. The count, in his rich general's-uniform, and all the other officers, radiant in the brilliancy of their arms and stars, with fine, tight-fitting garments, and military carriage, looked noble enough. But far more beautiful and imposing to Heloise was the sight of the Oriental warriors, all of them tall, slender men, with regular features, in their loose, full garments, and seated so gracefully, and with so easy a deportment, on their splendid coursers, as if they had spent their lives on horseback.

The place of meeting was about a quarter of a mile east of the fort, at a point where the road widened considerably. Heloise's open carriage stood a little on one side. She looked inexpressibly lovely, in her light summer dress—for the intense heat had induced her to lay off for a short time the deep mourning which, at the count's desire, she had worn since the death of the prince, her grandfather, for him also. A white hat and plume, from which floated a white veil of fairy texture, covered her fine head, and her lovely form was only transparently hidden by the rich lace shawl around her shoulders. By her side, a foil to her beauty, as it were, sat Kalinoffska in the most gaudy attire; on the opposite seat was Nanny

When the count, with his guests, turned and rode by her carriage, he touched his hat to her by way of salute. All the officers respectfully followed his example, as did also the Circassian princes, who laid their hand on their forehead, without looking at her, and doubtless not without an unpleasant sensation of being obliged to show so much deference to a woman. For even the noblest of the sex among the Circassians respectfully turns aside when she meets a man, to let him pass on his own way unhindered, and when she happens to come upon a warrior who is standing still, she generally, from pure awe, creeps by behind his back. Arslan's eye alone fell full upon her, and remained fixed. There was such an indescribable fire in his glance, that, much embarrassed, she involuntarily dropped her veil before her face. And yet there was nothing insolent in the gaze that thus hung upon her. It was but for a moment—the horsemen flew past her. Her carriage was slowly following them towards home, when, with surprise, she saw the cavalcade halt before the gates of Jekaterinodar. The count had had accommodations prepared in the city for some of the chiefs, but it was found that when he ordered one of his adjutants to conduct them to their quarters, some consternation arose among the Circassians. They looked at each other significantly, and none of them showed inclination to remain. They were perhaps thinking of the princes of the Kabarda, who, some years ago, on a similar occasion, had been led away captive to the interior of Russia. The count, however, immediately regained his presence of mind, invited them all to the camp, and managed to accommodate them all.

Mademoiselle Kalinoffska and Nanny broke out in praises of Arslan's beauty. "And what flashes of lightning he hurled at your honor," said the latter. "Didn't he look at our gracious countess just as if he wanted to eat her up? Such a heathen has a heart, too. But look, your honor, if he was the Sultan himself even, I wouldn't think him good

enough for my dear young lady!" Heloise laughed; but when they arrived at home, soon after, they were struck with the disturbed expression of Guasha's countenance; she had been on the watchtower, to see the chieftains ride past.

"Poor child," said Heloise, compassionately, "has it agitated you so much to see your still free countrymen? Did you know any one of them!" she added in Russian.

Guasha's cheek grew of a deeper crimson: "Do I know one of them? Should I not know Arslan Mansur, who was my father's pupil?"

"Was he that? But you must have been a little child at that time. I have heard his history. He has been educated in St. Petersburg since his fifteenth year."

"And did he not come back to us, to help his people resist the malice of the Muscovite? And do not all the maidens speak of him, and all the minstrels sing of him? Who should not know the young lion? His *Atalik* was called happy, to have educated him. At Stawropolis he lay on the battle-ground with two of my brothers. Oh, countess, thou art right—I was still young, I was yet a child when I saw him daily. But he kindly played with the child. He taught me to worship his God; he gave me this." She took out her little silver cross, and a large, hot tear fell upon it. Heloise thought she could look into the poor girl's heart. She was silent, but Nanny, less delicate, said: "And when he came back, you were a large girl. Did he remember the cross then?"

"Indeed he thought of it, Nanny, and he asked me if I had it yet, and I told him that I wore it on my heart, for he is like my brother. Then he said, 'I wish thou couldst marry a Christian, Guasha, but no Muscovite.'"

"And why did he not marry you himself?" asked Nanny, boldly.

Guasha's face again turned crimson. She cast a long, burning look on Nanny—and then her eyelids, with their

fringes of dark and long lashes, slowly fell. It seemed as if a curtain suddenly shut out the sun from a maiden's chamber. "He cannot do that," she said, in a low voice, "he is a prince, and I only a nobleman's daughter. No man of honor marries beneath his rank."

"There he ought to have let the Muscovite teach him better," cried Nanny. "Even the emperor's brother has done it. You would have made a handsome couple." Guasha turned away half embarrassed, half offended. But Heloise requested Nanny to be silent. She was kinder than ever to Guasha. For did she not know, but too well, what it was to love hopelessly?

On the following day a magnificent entertainment was to be given to the guests. The count had the arms of civilization in readiness against them. A feast was contemplated, which the ladies were to adorn with their presence. The lady and daughters of the commandant, Princess Gawriloff—who was awaiting the recovery of her son—and a few other officers' wives, staying at Jekaterinodar, to be near their husbands, were invited to form Heloise's court. The general's large tent had been transformed, as if by magic, into a splendid apartment, fitted out with furniture, carpets, and draperies of all kinds, which had been brought from Taganrog by special express. But the most imposing decoration was a significant one: the polished, elegant arms which were suspended all around, arranged in arabesques, and interwoven with oak-leaves. War or peace was here to be offered to the impetuous heroes.

The count, with an ease peculiar to himself, found means to force the latter into the observance of European customs. He announced to them, with the consciousness of doing them an uncommon honor, that his daughter would receive them in her apartments at an early hour, for which interview he

had also prepared Heloise. It was only upon the five noblest of the guests, however, that this honor was conferred.

The prince of Temigui was the least in power, among the chieftains, and had not acquired, either by a remarkable degree of bravery or wisdom, an important influence. But he was an old man, nearly seventy years of age. For this reason the precedence was given him on all occasions; for the Circassians reverence age with a piety which recalls to us the manners of the Spartans. No one sat down, while he was standing; no one remained seated, when he rose. He was followed by Psugui, Prince of Psadug, the first in power; a man of noble deportment, cautious demeanor, and gentle manners. He had married the daughter of a Crimean Czar, and had often come in contact with the Russians, whose language he understood somewhat. The clearest proof of the respect in which Mansur Arslan was held, and of the high station in which his heroism and energy had placed him, was, that notwithstanding his youth, his voice was of more importance in the council than that of any other, and that even on extraordinary occasions, only the two above-mentioned chiefs preceded him. With Heloise he was of course the spokesman, as he had acquired the French language at St. Petersburg. So that, after Heloise and Prince Psugui had exchanged a few salutations and civilities in broken Russian, she had to carry on the conversation with him alone, while the rest—all of them fine, handsome men—looked on with that proud Oriental indifference, which appears to the European like contempt. Arslan, to be sure, did not speak French with Count Dabanoff's elegance, but every word that he said was rendered important by the expressive glances which accompanied it. Heloise had never seen a nobler-looking man. The high forehead, the delicate, straight nose, the finely-formed mouth, seemed to belong to

a Greek statue; but from the dark, burning eyes there shone a rich, vigorous life, and the consuming fire of the Orient. He wore the Turkish turban, richly-embroidered garments, and the hilt of his sword, as also the dagger in his belt, were set with jewels.

"I am happy, prince," said Heloise, "to welcome in you a Christian."

"As a son I am a Christian," replied Arslan; "it is the religion of war and of suffering."

"It is the religion of peace and reconciliation, prince," said Heloise, gently.

"Do not your Christian princes war against each other, countess?" asked Arslan.

"Would to God," replied Heloise, "that they would better obey the precepts of their religion!"

"Do you not think, countess, that St. George was a good Christian? And do not all pictures represent him as fighting and killing?"

"Fighting with monsters, killing dragons—yes."

"Perhaps the painters meant the monsters of oppression, the dragons of extortion and official rapacity."

Heloise felt that he was right, and changed the subject. She spoke of Guasha, who, with her other attendants, was standing in the antechamber through which the princes had passed. Arslan had recognized her.

"Is she not happy in serving you?" he inquired.

"She loves me, but she would be happier among her mountains. Could not some of her relations be found in her country, who would be glad to receive her? I myself have endeavored, but in vain, to find, among the prisoners, traces of her mother, or sisters-in-law. Oh, prince, can you not do your best to put an end to this terrible trade, of which, among my people, nothing is known?"

He looked at her for a moment, with a peculiar expres-

sion. "Ah! countess," he said, significantly, "do you do *your* best to put a stop to it!"

"Good God!" she cried, "what could I do?"

"Beauty is all-powerful in the East as well as in the West," he replied, and the fire in his eyes grew wilder.

"I did not know," answered Heloise, smiling, but without satisfaction, "that the Oriental knights also practise gallantry."

"From the lips of the Oriental that is a sentiment which from those of the European is a gallantry."

"And what can you do for Guasha?" asked Heloise, turning the subject.

"I will send her to my mother. She will have her baptized, and procure an asylum for her in her convent; for she does not wish to marry. There she can weep for her loved ones undisturbed."

Heloise had not time to ascertain whether this answer was heartless, or betrayed a deep feeling. The old chieftain rose, and with him the others. Soon after she heard them galloping away.

She now proceeded to her toilet, and called Guasha to braid her hair. While the girl was taking down the latter, and she could not look in her face, she told her, in a few words, that she had spoken of her to Arslan. "Would you like to go to his mother?" she asked, without mentioning the convent.

But Guasha, without answering, pulled her hair about, and passed the comb through it with such violence that Heloise looked round in surprise. Guasha looked pale and harassed. A deep sorrow played convulsively around her mouth.

"What ails you, Guasha?" asked Heloise, with an affectionate glance.

"He loves thee, countess," said the girl, fixing her eye upon her.

"Nonsense!" replied Heloise, blushing. "He hardly knows me."

"Love needs no long acquaintance. One glance is enough. He saw thee, who art so beautiful, and loved thee. I know it from Nanny."

"I beg of you, be quiet," said Heloise, with a half-guilty feeling, and resumed her seat before the glass. "Let me braid my hair myself; you are agitated, and pull it too much."

Oh no, no, I will do it! I will adorn thee, I will make thee beautiful for—"

But Heloise stopped her by a serious look. Guasha continued her work with trembling hands, though apparently somewhat calmer, and successfully finished her task. But when she was about fastening a richly-embroidered gauze veil to her mistress's back hair, she suddenly pricked her so violently in the head with the pearl brooch which she had in her hand, that Heloise sprang up in alarm. But Guasha rushed from the room, sobbing loudly, to her chamber. "Poor, poor heart!" thought Heloise, and summoned Nanny to wash the blood from her hair.

Our heroine looked most enchanting, as, with her zephyr-like white robes thrown around her, like a veil of clouds, she stood in the midst of the warriors: for the looks of all were turned only upon her—all the other women disappeared beside her. The eyes of one, above all, tore themselves forcibly away, only to fall back upon her, as if dreaming, a moment after. A long, rich table was spread, at which Heloise was to preside. The prince of Psadug and Arslan were seated beside her, and next the former, Princess Gawriloff. The other ladies were distributed among the higher officers. In another, adjoining division of the tent, carpets were spread, on which the viands were served on large waiters with low feet, for those of the Circassians who disdained or found it inconvenient to eat in the Occidental style. By far the greatest

number of the princes and nobles stretched themselves around the latter. The count and his adjutants did not sit down at the table, so as to be every where and best provide for their guests. The former displayed all his amiability. There was no lack of rich and rare wines, and but few of the Circassians were sufficiently strict Mahometans to refuse them.

Meanwhile Heloise, remembering Guasha, had almost lost her ease under Arslan's consuming glances, particularly as she remarked that her father's eye rested on her and her neighbor from time to time, with a peculiar expression. There was something lurking in his look. She at first concluded that he was watching her, to see how, little accustomed as she was to representation, she would behave in her new situation. Then, when Arslan's fire, increased by the wine, broke out more conspicuously, she thought that his behavior troubled her father. But he gave no signs of either one or the other. On the contrary, he treated her with the greatest respect, and the young prince with a distinction which was remarked by all, and obviously gratified his pride.

Heloise asked Arslan to tell her about his mother. He did so with warmth, and a certain deep pity, which Heloise understood well. Thus they came to speak of the situation of the women among the Circassians. "It is not as you imagine it, countess," he said; "for you know us only from the reports of our enemies. It is true, the women serve in my country, but beauty reigns," he added, with a burning glance which was not to be misunderstood.

"Your remark makes the evil still greater, in my opinion," replied Heloise, thinking of Leonora's words: 'Were there but men—' etc.* "If you understood my language, I could

* "Were there but men, who knew to estimate
A woman's heart; who could but recognize
The treasure, boundless, rich, of love and truth,

prove it to you by the most beautiful, the most delicate verses that have ever been written. Beauty is not the best of us. It is but a transient, uncertain treasure. It is our sex, our weakness itself, which you must honor, and we only honor a man in as far as he does so."

"It is true," rejoined Arslan, with some scorn, "we have still much to learn. But instruction-books are not written with the point of the sword. Why have the Christian powers never sent us an apostle? Perhaps you know, fair countess, that it was a woman, one from whom the race of my mother derives its origin, who first introduced Christianity among these mountains. And what one woman has laid the foundation for—would it be impossible for another to build that up again? Another, who is surely lovelier and holier than Tamar can ever have been?"

Heloise looked at him in confusion, but the piercing, passionate glance which replied to hers, explained to her his meaning. "Is it possible?" she thought, "can he have formed such an insane idea?" She spoke of other things, but he knew how to turn every subject upon her, and she saw plainly how, with impetuous rapidity, his hope increased with his desire. At length, when her father, with an artful glance upon her, approached her, she requested his permission to give the signal to rise.

The afternoon had been fixed upon by the count for a con-

Which is contained within a woman's breast;
If but your glance, which elsewhere penetrates,
Could also pierce beyond the veil which oft
By age or sickness is thrown over us;
If that possession, which should quiet you,
Would not awake desire for other's goods—
A joyful day would then for us have risen,
And we would celebrate our golden age."

Goethe's *Tasso*.

ference with the Circassians, who, if they had considered the matter beforehand, would not perhaps have chosen such a time for the transaction of important business. For the wine and strong spices had risen into the heads of several, and all felt heavy and heated. But the count had paper and writing-materials in readiness. He first conferred with them all together, and then with several of them privately. His interview with Arslan was particularly long. When they at length separated, the young man's eyes sparkled with joy. Any one who took particular notice of the count might have found his handsome face disfigured by a certain sneering triumph, which he easily concealed from more superficial observers under an expression of polite gayety.

CHAPTER XVII.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER ONCE AGAIN.

Heloise felt considerably relieved, when she was again seated on her sofa at home. She could not but think with some uneasiness of the burning passion which spoke from Arslan's looks. "Could he really be senseless enough to think that I would be willing to follow him to his mountains, to weave for him, and stuff his divans with wool, and whitewash the walls of his house, as, by Guasha's report, the princesses do in his country?" She laughed. "Well, if not just that, if even he were to promise me that I should do nothing but embroider and make preserves, can he really think for a moment that a Russian general would give him his daughter?" A misgiving crept over her heart, a slight mistrust in her father—when his crafty smile, his lurking glances, came up before her soul's eye—that he might perhaps take advantage of the young man's passion, to entice him to desert the cause of his people. But she repulsed the idea with horror. "The brother of my foster-mother, my father, *cannot* commit so base, so treacherous an act."

In the evening he came himself, at a later hour than he had ever before visited her. His step was that of triumph, his countenance wore the supercilious expression of success.

"Well, Heloise," he said, with a smile, "how are you satisfied with your day's work? I see you understand more than spinning yarn; you know how to weave nets from it, to capture young lions."

"My dear father"—interrupted Heloise, in a supplicating tone.

"Really," he continued, laughing, the order of St. Catharine cannot escape you, so great are the services which you render to the crown. No, the large cross of St. George, rather, for you have taken one of the chief fortresses. I hardly thought, when you arrived here, that we could make such good use of you. But when you came gliding along, like a sylph sprung from another world, just as if a white lily had come to life, and had suddenly been endowed with lips and eyes, I would have defied any one to resist you. If you were to try, you might gain them all for me, the old one with the white beard perhaps excepted. If we only once have the young lion securely bound—how says your poet?—

'Soon as he's undone,
Others must be won,
And the youths to passion victims fall.'"*

He laughed aloud. Heloise almost doubted her senses. She hardly knew her father. He had made up for the lost dinner by a late supper, and had become—a very rare thing for him, however—considerably excited by wine, so that he was rather more sincere than he intended to be. But his daughter's look of astonishment soon brought him to himself.

"I do not understand you, father," she said, gravely.

"Not? Can it have escaped your notice that you have made a conquest of Prince Mansur, the young, wild lion, who, until now, in spite of all endeavors, has remained untamed?"

"I have indeed remarked that his heart, which probably takes fire very easily, has also been kindled by me. But

* Goethe's *Bride of Corinth.*

what is that to us? The flame will die away again as quickly as it rose at first."

"Hardly; particularly if we stir the fire awhile, until we have warmed ourselves by it."

"And what good would that do you, father?" inquired Heloise, fixing a look of holy purity upon him; "what good would that do you, even if it were honorable?"

"Oho! so you do not like him?"

"Like him? I think, father, that he is a noble man—he looks to me as if he might be a great man—yes, father, as if he might once be the deliverer of his country."

The count's face turned dark-crimson: "I see, Heloise, you are leagued with the enemy."

"Dearest father, I did not mean that. But I would wish that you could make these brave men, these friends of their people, friends of your emperor."

"That is just what I would do."

"But without debasing them, father?"

"Hm! I do not consider myself so very base. So you do like him, Heloise—this young lion?"

"What do you mean by my liking him? Such a liking as, from your smile, I should judge you had reference to, is of course out of the question."

"And why so?"

"Father!" cried Heloise, with horror; "you cannot think of giving me to a barbarian, a partial Mussulman!"

"And why not, to a brave man, the friend and future deliverer of his people, who would debase himself by swearing allegiance to the emperor?"

"Father, I cannot understand you; you cannot be in earnest. It does not follow, because a man is brave, that he is cultivated—his people are not my people—the wild independence which constitutes his happiness, cannot satisfy me."

"What difference does all that make, Heloise?" replied

her father, perfectly calm, while she grew more and more excited. "You are the daughter of a princess," he added, with a sarcastic smile; "royal suitors are not to be found every day. If you do not take a Circassian prince, you must perhaps take up with a mere nobleman."

Heloise looked into his eyes with painful earnestness. Then, suddenly springing towards him, she twined her arms around his neck: "No, father, no!" she cried, and a torrent of tears burst from her eyes; "you cannot mean so, you cannot wish to sacrifice your child thus!"

The count pressed her close to his breast, and looked down upon his beautiful daughter with no small degree of paternal tenderness. "Well, if you know me so well, then, I must fain give up to you. You need not fear; I am not the fool to throw away my best jewel. My jewel"—he added, regarding her with satisfaction—"that would adorn a crown, to a robber-chief! But—no matter—it will be good for him to be kept for awhile in his bold belief."

"It cannot be that he has hope!" cried Heloise, in alarm.

"But he does hope, for he is young and presumptuous. And besides, his ancestor, he thinks, was as well a sovereign as the emperor of the Muscovites; and is not his mother the daughter of a Czar? What say you to resolving to become princess of the Kabarda, to subject the untamed highlanders to your gentle sceptre, and, like Arslan's great-grandmother, to lead the wild Georgians, the Circassian mountaineers, to Christianity? Could you perhaps be induced to pay a trifling tribute to the emperor, and to recognize his supremacy?"

The scornful tone into which the count had relapsed, was painful to Heloise's feelings. She looked at him searchingly. "Can it be," she said at length, "that the young man, little acquainted with European relations, has really

formed this ambitious plan? Well, as far, at least, as the part in it which he has assigned to your daughter, is concerned, you can easily have enlightened him."

"For what? Can it injure your reputation to have him, for a few months, consider you as his betrothed? I will explain the true state of things to him in due time."

"Father, would that be honorable? Would it even be humane, to let him fall a victim to such a delusion?"

"Is it perhaps humane to let hundreds of thousands be sacrificed for his dream of liberty, his excessive pride? This fruitful land shall have peace, and this poor people quiet, as soon as the haughty chiefs will submit."

"But the other princes?"

"Each one has his price. The eyes of him of Hatukwoi sparkle when he only sees a piece of gold. What avarice will work in one, ambition will in another. If I can but secure Arslan, I am sure of them all."

"And will he not, in the end, discover the deception, and then recall every thing? And will not the nobles revolt against him, if they hear that he was about to betray them?"

"The most influential of the nobles, as you call them, are here expressly to enable me to secure them. You can distinguish them by their red shoes—in cultivation you would hardly find them different from their grooms. But I must say, Heloise, that you make use of extremely mild expressions: 'Deception!' 'Treachery!' Romantic virtues cannot well be exercised in politics."

"And will the people submit, father," asked Heloise, after sadly meditating awhile, "even if the principal chiefs set them the example?"

"As soon as I have secured their signatures, and, with their consent, the levying of troops has commenced, I shall have advanced by a considerable step. Among this people, who have grown up under arms, I do not fear a scarcity of

recruits. In the Kabarda we might have as many as we wished. It probably does not make much difference to the people, for whom and for what they fight, and a *silver-rouble* a day is not to be despised."

"And the princes have consented—they have undersigned?"

"They have not yet given a definite consent, and only promised to undersign; for to-morrow morning, I have induced them to give an exhibition of their skill in combat and horsemanship. Nothing flatters their vanity more. You ladies shall witness their feats. The afternoon is fixed upon for a final conference, for they intend to leave the day after to-morrow. To-morrow afternoon they must be mine."

Heloise sat silent for a long time, absorbed in painful reflections, while her father also followed his meditations. At length she spoke:

"Father, I cannot take a part in your game. I shall tell Arslan, to-morrow, that I do not love him; that no power on earth could induce me to give him my hand."

"Do as you please," replied the count, with forced indifference, "only do not hope to accomplish any thing by that. It will not discourage him. The Circassians are accustomed to *buy* their wives from their fathers. He thinks to have bought you from me, only that the price does not consist in cattle and carpets, but in what he calls the liberty of his people, and in his own haughty independence. We are to make him prince of the Kabarda. He promises, in that case, to win the mountaineers over to our cause, and thus enlarge his own kingdom. Hm! no bad idea!

"But it is growing late," continued the count, rising. "One thing more, Heloise! I require nothing of you—no dissimulation, no advances; be as cold and distant as you wish. Only do not, uncalled-for, and with childish hands, meddle with my web, so as to entangle the threads. The af-

fair with Arslan remains a secret for the present, so that it will not impose a great restraint upon you. Or rather," he added, with a slight, contemptuous smile, "each one of them has his secret with me. Good night; I trust to your prudence."

When, in parting, he kissed her forehead, he felt how icy cold she was; but he did not wish to take any notice of it. He would hardly have desired to have seen her contented. "She does not know the world," he thought, as he rode home; "she grew up in the country. Heaven knows how my sister, who was herself educated at court, can have kept her in such a dream of virtue. But she was herself somewhat exalted in her ideas—and I loved her all the more for that purity, which becomes woman so well!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

A LETTER.

The count had left Heloise indescribably unhappy. By degrees the ideal image of her father, which she had brought with her to the confines of Europe, had broken down entirely. Piece by piece, parts had fallen off from the statue that she had erected him in her heart, which she had thought indispensable in a being that is pleasing in the sight of God: first, mercy; then, justice and holy faith; and now, truth. She knew that her father was harsh, sometimes to inhumanity; he despised mankind; he had renounced his youth and its fruits, and lived only as a citizen of his new country, as a warrior. All this had often pained her. But ah! she had hoped that he fought only with honorable weapons! That, like the tempter, he should have found a price for all; that, with such terrible coldness, so heartlessly, he should spin the threads in which to entangle the enemy, and should know how to draw them into the net with such craftiness—all this depressed her deeply, so deeply that she thought never to be able to raise herself again. She the daughter of an—*impostor!* Would not, in narrower spheres, in less important relations, any one who acted thus, be called by that name? Could she still love, still esteem such a father?

The count was right when he said to himself that Heloise did not know the world. She knew nothing of the irresistible and demoralizing influences of the world in general, and of

diplomatic relations and a warrior's life in particular, in both of which the count had acquired experience. Was there one among Lützow's black and red band who had fought with a warmer love for the German common fatherland and for its liberty—who had hated the oppressor with a purer, less selfish hatred than he? His own father had been raised to apparently great honors by the tyrant, but that did not lessen the virtuous aversion of the son, who, with pure burning hate—like spotless, entire, sacrificing love in the stronger sex, the noble privilege of youth—had stood up against the tyrant, just because he was a tyrant. This feeling was still powerful within him, when he allowed himself to be carried away by passion to take the imprudent step of a secret marriage. But it was just this step that gave the first occasion to initiate him in the trivialities of the life of intrigue at one of the small German courts, which filled his soul with disgust.

After this, his flight, the necessity of making his own way, and his ambition, which awoke with might, led him into that world of poisonous plants, the relations of Russian life and service. His ill luck involved him, from the beginning, deeply in the Russian-Oriental affairs. The seventeen years that had passed since his flight, he had spent principally—with the exception of the Polish campaign, which did not better the case much—in the wars with the Persians, Turks, and Tartars, or in the administration of the Russian-Oriental provinces. Among these connections, where brutality and intrigue, temerity and cowardice, despotism and servility, often meet in such strong contrast, his nice German point of honor had at first sickened, and at length become extinct; his moral sense had grown dim. He saw, all around, the most shameless extortions practised with impunity, and hardly even censured by public opinion; he saw human beings treated like things, and—what had still more quickly taught him to despise them—saw them submit to it. His youth lay behind him

like a dream; his ambition, swelling to a passion, threatened to crowd all other feelings from his soul.

Only a letter from his sister, the oldest and best friend of his youth, to whose wisdom and goodness he had always looked up, would from time to time carry him back to his purer past for a moment; every other tie was broken. He belonged to the present, and, by his ambitious plans, to the future.

In the night following his interview with Heloise, there occurred one of the rare, but violent thunder-storms of those regions, and the rain poured down in such torrents the next morning, that the warlike sports, for which preparations had been made, had to be suspended. Towards noon, however, the sky seemed to look more clear. The general, therefore, did not wish the conference which had been fixed for the afternoon, to be postponed; but the younger of the nobles, who had justly hoped to gain much honor by the racing, target-shooting, and tilting, which had been promised them, manifested such ill-humor at the idea of not taking advantage of the cooler weather which was so favorable to their sports, that the chieftains urged the Russian commander to postpone the conference till the next morning, and volunteered to remain a day longer. The count suppressed his impatience, so as not to awaken suspicion, and gave his consent, although very reluctantly; for he had lived, for the last few days, in the greatest suspense.

Heloise passed the morning in irresolution. What could she do? She felt decidedly that she must let the chiefs and nobles of the Cuban provinces go their own way. But was it not her duty to warn Arslan, who, from blind passion for her, for the sake of possessing her, was about perhaps to plunge into destruction, and was drawing upon himself, without compensation, the reproach of being the traitor of his country? "He deserves nothing better," she said, with bitterness; "if he is willing to sell the liberty of his country for a

mock-crown, and the satisfaction of an amorous whim, it is but just that he should be disappointed in such wicked hopes!" And yet her soul was moved with a deep pity for the beautiful, gallant youth. What young girl will not sympathize with her?

She could not bear to think that she should first be the bait to make him faithless to what he considered conformable to his duty and honor, and then so cruelly deceive him.

When she learnt that the conference had been postponed till the next morning, and that she would have occasion to meet Arslan once more, she formed her plan. She would repulse him so completely, by a cold, haughty demeanor, that he would be disheartened, and if this were not sufficient, she would herself seek an interview with him, to declare to him that he could never hope for her consent—without, however, exposing her father.

Nanny, when she saw her young mistress so sad, lingered around, and made herself sundry errands in the room. As Guasha had hardly made her appearance since the morning before, but sat in her chamber, working, and entirely neglected her duties as waiting-maid, Nanny had taken her place. "We'll let her have her cry out," said the latter, "love flows away at last drop by drop. She knows herself that she can't get him, for they've got queer laws about rank. It's worse, even, than the spirit of caste, as my good father used to call it, in the Austrian country. But if he's too high for her, he's yet a few steps too low for my young countess, that's a fact. Your honor wonders, don't you, that I should know any thing about it? But servants, your honor may believe, have good eyes. And if they'd been blind, they'd have had to see how he devoured the fair countess with his eyes yesterday, the fire shone so bright out of them."

"Let the matter rest, dear Nanny," said Heloise.

"Well, well," replied the other, "but I only just wanted

to say, as far as the servants are concerned, they make the best spies. Your honor remembers, perhaps, what I talked about the first evening, before I knew who the beautiful young lady was?"

"Yes, and you probably remember, too, that frequently, when you have hinted at it since, I have asked you not to say any thing about it."

"And I've obeyed my young countess, though it's almost made my heart burst sometimes. What do you think, your honor? since then I've hoped day and night, that my countess would find out that I'm set here to be a spy upon her. But no such thing. Your honor lives more in heaven than on earth."

At this point Heloise's curiosity could resist no longer. "What do you mean, Nanny?" she asked.

Nanny smiled in quiet triumph, and said slyly: "For the present, your honor needn't be afraid of getting a step-mother." And when Heloise looked at her inquiringly,—"Soon after your honor came here, his Excellency broke off with my princess."

"And who has made you a spy, Nanny?"

"Well, your honor, you see, not half a month had gone, before there came a letter to me from my old mistress, and in it she told me the finest things, how she'd always liked me so well, and how she'll reward me if I'll find out what's the reason that the count has broken off with her, and says she feels perfectly innocent. Innocent! He, he, he! And she wants to know if it's the daughter that hates her so, and that's put her papa against her. So I wrote to her that she could be sure that wasn't so, the countess was a saint, that didn't hate a living soul, but I'd try to find out what was the reason. For she gives very handsome presents!"

"Well, and what have you found out, Nanny?"

"Oh nothing! For knowing and imagining are two dif-

ferent things. I've had my own thoughts about it, to be sure, but I haven't said any thing about them—thoughts are toll-free, your honor knows. So I have thought, in my mind, his Excellency's old sovereign's dead now, and so he's become the brother-in-law of the new one, and a real member of a German royal family; so he might do better. Such a handsome man as the count is, particularly, and such a great warrior—any German princess would be glad to have him. And one of those is rather more than such a Mongolian *Knjägina*,* with her broad nose and her painted cheeks. He never could have liked her by daylight; she's older than he, too, and if she is mighty rich, she isn't the only one."

"Nanny," said Heloise, embarrassed, and avoiding the sly glance of her attendant, "how you talk!" The blood had mounted to her face while the other was speaking—she thought it but too probable that the shrewd woman had guessed right. She broke off the conversation abruptly, but not without experiencing a certain satisfaction that for the present, at least, nothing was to be feared from that quarter.

When she reached the camp, all the other ladies were already assembled, and her arrival only had been waited for to commence the martial representation. A sort of staging had been erected for the ladies, on which Heloise occupied the place of honor. It was surrounded by whole troops of infantry officers on horseback, while on both sides, a short distance off, the soldiers were stationed in files, as spectators. The cavalry occupied the most remote portion of the camp, and did not make its appearance during the visit of the Circassian princes. For the Cossacks, as their most inveterate enemies, the count did not wish to bring into the slightest contact with them, and the heavy cavalry was the weakest

* The Russian word for princess.

part of the army: which deficiency he preferred rather to conceal than to show.

On the other side he had ordered the martial pageants to be commenced with the exhibition of a regiment of cavalry which did not belong to the regular troops, and had been drilled in the Circassian manner. It consisted of Kabardines, Georgians, ransomed prisoners, who had become familiar with the Circassian military exercise, but principally of deserters. It was most splendidly equipped, and while, with national activity and the rapidity of lightning, it combined the precision and uniformity of well-disciplined troops, it could well present the ideal of a carefully-trained body of soldiers. The count had, in this exhibition, a three-fold object. First he wished to show the chieftains the esteem in which he held their manner of fighting—for he had drilled this regiment himself; then they were to see how many of their valiant men he had already gained possession of; and lastly, he hoped, by this example, to reconcile them to the thought of seeing their own friends and relations among this number.

The chieftains looked on in silence, and none of the expected impressions could be read in their faces of marble, whose rigid Oriental regularity is only moved by the storms of passion—by no lurking thought, no passing emotion, whether of satisfaction or displeasure.

Now commenced the martial sports of the *Works* and *Tokavs*, i. e. the nobles and freemen. The princes, with the exception of Mansur Arslan, were mere spectators. The latter had not been able to withstand the temptation to show himself to the young countess in his most brilliant light, and his own youth seemed to obviate the impropriety of his participation. As he sat there, on the proud, fiery, Georgian steed, in his brilliant armor, his breast covered with a coat of mail of the finest workmanship, and a silver network helmet of peculiar shape on his head, he recalled to Heloise's mind all the

charms of chivalry. Thus Rinaldo, thus Amadis must have looked! She had to extricate herself by main force from the magic illusion with which the living romance of his appearance surrounded her. The steed, too, under him, an ideal of noble beauty, of a shining silver-gray, and looking about with marvellous intelligence, seemed to feel the honor of bearing such a rider. It drew itself up proudly, danced about gracefully on its slender legs, and its nostrils, scenting the combat, breathed forth its hardly to be restrained impatience. And when the racing commenced, onward it flew, quick as thought, hardly touching the ground with its feet, eager to win the victory for its master. The discharge of innumerable pistols accompanied the flying steeds. Then came, likewise accompanied by the music of artillery, the target-shooting, in which the competitors had to hit the mark while flying past it at full speed, or springing off their galloping horse and on again, like lightning. The last of the exhibition was a tilting-match, where there was no lack of bruises and scratches. In most of these exercises Arslan was the decided victor. And in none of the contests was any one before him. His eye often sought that of Heloise, who, involuntarily carried away with interest in the combat and admiration, could only with difficulty keep up the cold, grave expression by which she hoped to discourage him.

Stunned by the noise and tumult of the combat, the ladies at length retired to a tent where refreshments were prepared for them. They were followed by Mansur Arslan, unarmed, but still glowing with the combat. Heloise, under the pretext of being very much fatigued and wishing to rest a moment, had seated herself on a divan which stood a little apart, and commissioned Mademoiselle Kalinoffska to request the other ladies, who sat in a circle near the entrance of the tent, to excuse her for a few minutes. The young hero entered with some embarrassment, but when he was followed

by some officers, who commenced conversing with the ladies, he quickly approached Heloise, and seated himself on the other end of the divan.

"How bold!" she thought, but she felt that she must take advantage of the moment. She therefore looked at him inquiringly, upon which he immediately, but without arrogance, moved nearer to her: "I see you depressed and sad, countess, and could hate myself for feeling so happy notwithstanding."

"Perhaps, prince," she replied, "I have better cause for sadness than you for joy."

"If only it is not the *same* cause," answered he. "It is your father, countess, who has made me happy."

"I might reply to you: he it is that has made me sad. But why play with words—we have but a few moments. Let us employ them for the strictest sincerity, prince."

"What can be more sincere than my fervent, burning, unquenchable love?" he said—and how much more lay in the inexpressible glance which he threw upon her!

"Prince," she replied, painfully agitated by this glance, "my time is short. I cannot be delicate and womanly, as I would wish to be—because it is better to be sincere than delicate. I cannot appreciate the gift of your noble heart. I do not love you—I can never be your wife."

His face grew deathly pale and burning red by turns, while she was speaking. "Each of your words is a dagger to my heart. But I cannot hate you for them. I love you doubly for this sincerity."

"But you cannot wish to marry a woman who does not love you."

"My love will conquer your hatred."

"Do not deceive yourself, prince. I do not hate you, I esteem you highly, but I will never give you my hand."

"I have your father's word," he replied, gloomily.

"My father may answer for what he does—if he can," she added, with a deep sigh. "But however that may be, you are too generous to desire that he should force me."

"You are too good a daughter to be disobedient to him."

"Well, then, Arslan, hear me! You drive me to the utmost—my heart belongs to another!"

Heloise was alarmed at the effect of her words. The sadness in his eyes was suddenly changed to rage. It seemed as if they would eject poison. In a low, suppressed voice, he at length asked: "Who is he? He lives no more if my arm can reach him!"

"Ah! Arslan, he is far, far from here! I shall never be his. But could you wish to possess me after such a confession?"

"I have your father's word," he said once more, and his tone was more decided than before.

Heloise could contain herself no longer: "And with what are you going to buy this unhappy possession? With that which heretofore was holiest to you, with the freedom of your people, and your own independence? Prince, is not this price too high for you? Does it agree with your honor? Will not your nation call you a deserter, a traitor?"

These words, too, had so strong an effect, that Heloise would gladly have recalled them. Rage departed from his pale face, to give place to the returning expression of sadness, which suddenly mingled with so haughty a coldness, that Heloise felt as if she had wronged him.

"Countess," he said, in a hollow voice, "you misjudge me; I am no traitor. I have long felt that this war of extermination will never lead us to our aim. What can we, a little band, do against the gigantic superiority of Russia? The crown of the Kabarda is mine by right, my ancestor yielded it from a culpable weakness. My father rejected it from a mistaken idea that he could maintain his dignity only by

open warfare with Russia. But his and my ancestor had only submitted conditionally. After the example of many more powerful princes of Christendom, he did not consider it degrading to hold his domain in fee from one of the mighty of the earth. Such a conditional submission on my part, will keep my people free from that which your statesmen themselves call the actual cancer of the Russian government, from an objectionable host of office-holders. The emperor has need of our arm. It is surely more honorable for us to fight the wars of a Christian emperor, than those of the Turkish crescent. Inwardly we will govern ourselves, and will suffer him and his followers to travel unmolested to Georgia. How, countess—but yesterday you were wishing that Christianity might have free access to our mountains, and to-day you would make me a traitor, because I take the only possible step to open the way for it? But yesterday you believed yourself justified to despise us all, as barbarians, and to-day you hate me, because I am ready to lead my people to civilization? Heloise, I thought you were above the caprices of woman!"

Heloise was disconcerted. One glance from her expressive eyes, which were the mirror of her soul, told him that she appreciated his motives. But before she could answer, her father entered. He cast a penetrating glance towards her, and looked at Arslan searchingly. But a short conversation with the latter convinced him that his daughter had not betrayed him. Arslan's gloomy mood he could easily explain by the repulsive coldness with which Heloise treated him.

The latter approached the circle of ladies, who, in the interval, had been putting their heads together and whispering, and flew apart, when she joined them. Except Mademoiselle Kalinoffska, none of them was sufficiently familiar with French to have understood more than one or two words of the conversation, which had been carried on in a low voice;

and the latter, to oblige Heloise, had taken pains to divert the general attention from her. Meanwhile evening had come, and Heloise was glad to leave the company.

She arrived at home in deep emotion. Arslan appeared to her in a different light from before. What his heroic beauty, his burning devotion, and lastly, the whole splendid development of all his chivalresque virtues had not brought about, one moment, one passing glance into his soul had effected—she had learnt to esteem him. What should she do? Ought she to suffer the youth, who desired so noble an object, to plunge blindly into ruin? How if she should make up her mind to give him her hand, and to tread with him his difficult path—to be his assistant in the noble mission of religion and culture? It would be a high calling, sufficient to give value to her poor, worthless life.

But would her father ever give her to him? To him whom he looked upon as a mere brigand-chief? And was it possible for him to clothe him with the important power which he had enticingly promised to him? Ah! and she herself, could she, ought she to give him her hand, with the image of another in her heart, and the sure feeling that no one could ever there supplant this other? Would not that be moral adultery? And should she not tremble at such a sin? What were her father's plans? He had won the princes of the Cuban partly by considerable sums of money, and partly by dazzling promises. In the tent of Tugus, the prince of Machosh, a magnificent Russian general's-uniform had been seen, and many rolls of *silver-roubles* had already been divided among the *Works*, as presents.

In return for all this, nothing was demanded but the ceremony of signing names, and that a few regiments of infantry should be allowed to cross the Cuban, and a few more of cavalry to be enlisted there, by whose liberal wages the subjects would grow rich. All this, and much more, of which Heloise had only found out the above as true, had

been whispered about in the camp, and had also reached her. There were doubtless some secret articles besides, at which her father had hinted. The papers had been drawn up, and laid before the princes; had been altered according to their objections, and re-copied. All that was wanting were the signatures, which had been promised for the next morning. She must leave them to their fate.

But Arslan? He had been won for a higher price, which neither would nor could be paid him. He could be kept in suspense, but in the end he must discover that he had been deceived. His influence was considerable. He would have to be secured; his liberty, his life, perhaps, would have to be taken, if the Russians would not gain in him a dangerous, implacable enemy. She shuddered.

It was her duty to warn him. Her resolve was taken; she took up pen and paper. She wrote:

"Prince! I feel that the glance which you have, to-day, at the close of our interview, let me cast into your noble soul, makes perfect sincerity towards you, doubly my duty. Beware! Do nothing for the freedom of your people, that you cannot answer for as a Christian; and for their peace, prince, do nothing, sign nothing but what you would also do and sign without the hope of your ancestor's kingdom, and without the promise of my hand. After a long struggle I have come to the conviction that it is my duty to warn you. God guide your resolve, and his blessing be with you!"

She dared not sign the paper. She sealed it. But how was she to send the letter to the camp? And yet it must be done this evening. Guasha suddenly entered her mind, she scarcely knew how. Her maids had all gone to bed. In one of the outhouses she still heard the coachman and servants talking, and singing to the *Balalaika*. Hiding the letter in her bosom, and carefully shading the light with her hand, she glided through the row of apartments—where, stretched on

carpets and mattresses, her maids were snoring—to the other end of the house. Here was a small chamber which had been assigned to Guasha. The poor girl lay on the bed, still dressed. She had but just fallen asleep, for a tear still glistened on her cheek.

"Poor child," thought Heloise, "it will be a consolation to you to rescue him." She touched her lightly. Guasha started up.

When she saw a white figure standing before her, but dimly illumined by the shaded light, she took it for a vision, and commenced muttering incoherent words.

"It is I, Guasha," said Heloise,—"Tell me, do you love me?"

Guasha, who had risen, sank down before her, and embraced her knees. "Oh forgive me, countess, I surely love thee!" she said. But Heloise answered quickly,

"I have nothing to forgive. But if you wish to prove your love for me, you can do it now. Do you fear to go to the camp alone?"

"At this hour? What shall I do there among all those men?"

"You are to carry this letter to Arslan. Do not look at me so wildly! It is no love-letter. I have written to him, I have warned him. I have told him to remain faithful to his people. To-morrow morning it would be too late."

Guasha looked for a moment deep into her eyes. "Give it to me then," she said at length, her penetrating mind conjecturing the main thing; "I fear not the Adiges. Give me something for thy father, so that his guards will let me pass."

They crept to one of the front rooms, where stood a basket with linen, which Heloise had had done up for her father by one of her maids. Besides this she wrapped a book in paper, which the count had asked her for some days ago, and wrote the direction in Russian. "Only be sure,"

she said, "to put the letter into Arslan's hands, Guasha; I would be lost, if it were miscarried. And *he* would be lost, Guasha!"

"I shall give up my life before the letter, depend upon it, countess," replied Guasha, concealing the letter under her cap, and pulling her veil over her head. Heloise softly accompanied her to the house-door, to lock it behind her. She looked out upon the dark, sultry night. The sky was full of black, lowring thunder-clouds, which were occasionally broken by a flash of lightning.

"You cannot go, Guasha!" cried Heloise, in alarm.

"Didst thou not say that he was lost if he did not receive the letter, countess?"

"I did hope, by that letter, to deter him from a false step, which he would repent bitterly his whole life; but you cannot go in this weather, Guasha!"

"What care I for the weather, when *his* happiness is at stake?" asked Guasha, stepping out. "Besides, it may last a while yet before the storm comes down. In less than an hour I shall be in the camp."

She was already far off; Heloise looked after her in anxious suspense. At that moment a broad flash blazed through the night, and showed her, at the end of the street, in the most vivid light, the tall, slender figure of Guasha, as she sped along, with the basket on her head. A terrible clap of thunder, rolled along after her.

Heloise returned to her room in the greatest agitation. She opened the window, to see whether her messenger was still in sight. The part of the camp where the tents of the Circassians lay, was nearest to Jekaterinodar. Successive claps of thunder kept Heloise in continual fear about Guasha. Half an hour had hardly passed, when the black clouds broke, and sent forth an apparently inexhaustible flood. Heloise sat up the whole night, awaiting Guasha's return. But the

morning broke, and she came not. "She has probably stayed with one of the sutler-women, on account of the rain," thought Heloise. "The linen, which she would have to dry, was a good excuse." At daybreak she at length lay down, quite exhausted, and, with the happy privilege of youth, she soon sank into a deep, long, refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOMETHING UNEXPECTED.

When our heroine awoke, quite late, she was struck with the noise in the street, and the unusually loud talking in the house. She had but just risen, when Nanny put her head in at the door, and, when she saw the countess up, immediately entered the room.

"Well-a-day! So you've waked up at last! Hasn't your honor rested well? Well, other people haven't slept much, either! Just think, your honor, the Circassians have gone off in the night, one and all!"

"Gone! How is that possible, Nanny?" asked Heloise, in amazement.

"Possible or not, it's so, your honor. The earth must have swallowed them up—or the thunder has rolled them away, for it was awfully loud last night. In short, they're off, and no trace of them left."

"How have you heard this, Nanny?—Does Guasha know about it?"

"I haven't laid my eyes on her this morning. The girl seems to be asleep yet. I've knocked at her door, but she must have been fast asleep, she didn't answer me; she never was so lazy before. But that comes from crying so much in the day-time."

"But is the news correct? They cannot have left secretly. The sentinels would have noticed it."

"The night was so awful and dark. One of the sentinels has been found dead on the ground; one says the light-

ning struck him, and another says they killed him. And the other two guards are off and away, too; they must have taken them along. You see, your honor, the horses were none of them in a stable; they were grazing in the open air, a little away from the camp, on a beautiful green pasture. That's the fashion of these wild people through the summer. So they must have crept there one by one in the dark night, and mounted their horses, and then gone off. It was only at a *Stanitza*,* a mile east from here, that they first gave the alarm. From our watchtower they couldn't see any thing for the darkness, nor hear either, for the dreadful rattling that the deluge of rain made."

"And what can have induced them—?" asked Heloise, at the same time turning to take something from the table, for if Nanny had seen her face at this question, her shrewd glance would soon have detected that her mistress knew more of the matter than she.

"The Lord only knows!" replied Nanny. "And his Excellency. They must have smelt a rat. But all the fine money that his Excellency has given them beforehand, they've taken along with them."

"And how did you hear all this?"

"The whole camp's full of it, and the town too. All's in confusion, for they say that the people opposite, right across the river, in Psadug, will break out now, and they've kept pretty quiet so far. Well, the Lord's will be done! I should be sorry for my little house, if they should come across us here in Jekaterinodar. I've put all my hardly-earned money into it. But where can Guasha be?"

No trace of the girl could be found. All inquiries were fruitless. It was at length found out that, the night previous, before the rain commenced, she had been stopped by

* Station.

one of the patrols, and that, on her assertion that she had to bring the general the linen, which he would want the next morning, so late, because she had forgotten to do the errand that the countess had given her, during the day—she had been suffered to pass without further hindrance. The basket, saturated with the rain, was found in the camp, at a considerable distance from the tents of the Circassians; the book, to Heloise's great relief, was not with it, for this, as well as the direction in her hand, would have led to the track of her connection with the affair, of which now no one had the least suspicion—except perhaps her father. That Guasha had fled with the Circassians, did not admit of a doubt; but as no one could imagine that her late visit had been the cause of this flight, the general opinion commenced to take it for the result of a previously-concerted plan. The faithlessness of this nation was loudly commented upon, as also the ingratitude with which they had repaid the hospitality of the Russian commander, and had extracted presents from him with avaricious cunning. Towards evening, at length, a Circassian *Pshilt*, or serf, was discovered, who had purposely remained behind, in order to take service in the Russian army, and had kept himself concealed until then. He had come to the camp as a servant to one of the nobles of Temigui, and had already been in Russia, in the language of which he could but just manage to make himself understood.

He was immediately taken before the general, who, by a great many questions, got out of the man that Arslan had entered the tent inhabited by the princes of Psadug and Temigui, quite late, and in the midst of thunder and lightning, just as he was waiting on the chiefs and some nobles at supper. The young man himself had been so agitated that the raging element seemed personified in him, and had requested them to assemble the nobles without delay. When this had been done, he made a fiery speech to them, in which he ex-

plained that the count was deceiving them, that there could be no peace with traitors, that they were to be taken prisoners and sent to St. Petersburg, and that he advised instant flight, as the storm favored it. The old man of Temigui had asked how he knew all this so suddenly; but Prince Arslan Mansur had inquired how he knew whether he had not long been aware of it. Perhaps he had only dissembled, and feigned confidence, so as to sift the count. Some of the princes and nobles had at first hesitated, but by degrees he alone had brought them all round (with the exception of Tugus Tshuruk Oglu, who left with reluctance), by his eloquence, and by repeatedly directing their attention to the thunder, and asking them whether they would not listen to the voice of the great God, who was speaking to them so plainly. While the camp lay hidden in the darkness of night, and was almost carried away by the flood of rain, they had crept, a few only at a time, to their horses, and had strangled the sentinels, stealing suddenly behind them, so as to prevent any noise. He himself—was the conclusion of the serf's narration—had concealed himself until he knew that they were already far away.

Not only the Russian camp was in the highest degree excited by this strange occurrence. On the southern shore of the Cuban its consequences were plainly seen. At the mouth of the river Shepis, where it empties into the Cuban directly opposite Jekaterinodar, lies the village in which Psugui, the prince of Psadug, resided. Its inhabitants were observed to be making preparations and arming themselves. Fires were blazing on the mountains, shots called up the echo of the valleys. It could be seen that something extraordinary was going on on the opposite shore, without it being plainly distinguishable what it was.

Spies brought the news of the general arming of Abazak and the Cuban countries, of the determination of the princes

to unite with the Shapzuks and Notachaizes, and to be free or die. The courage of the western highlanders rose rapidly with such aid. They too, were preparing for more important expeditions, while the nocturnal attacks on the military posts, and the ransacking of villages, continued.

Several days passed. Heloise had hardly seen her father. He was cold and gloomy. He did not visit her any more, and when she rode to the camp unasked, he had but little time for her. Nevertheless, he was not deficient in his usual politeness, and she had occasion to observe, that, while his anger frequently broke out so violently that the whole army trembled before him, he controlled himself alone before her. But she could not endure this unhappy state of things. She had resolved to submit to his anger, and be perfectly sincere towards him. But he intentionally avoided being alone with her, and when she once requested a short interview, as she had something to tell him, he answered, with severity: "I do not wish to hear any thing."

At this period the order for the breaking up of the camp was suddenly given. "What will become of me now?" thought Heloise. Dabanoff, whom she saw in passing, told her that her father thought of sending her back to St. Petersburg. This was cruel! Was she, far away from him, to lose his love entirely, to let him become completely estranged from her? But in the course of the morning the count galloped up to her door. He dismounted and came up stairs with hasty steps. "Heloise," he said, "a courier has just brought me the intelligence that the governor-general of New-Russia is on the coast. He will land at Ghelendshik to-morrow. Several ladies and gentlemen are in his suite, who have come to see the vanquished Circassians," he added, contemptuously, "for it is quite easy to make conquests on paper, you must know. Our unhappy policy keeps them in such ignorance, that, with foolish blindness, they are already begin-

ning to come to select picturesque situations for their villas on the shores of the Black Sea. But to you this visit offers a suitable opportunity to return to the civilized world, where you belong. You will remain under the protection of the noble governor-general until you hear from me again."

Heloise was most painfully agitated. "Oh father!" she cried, "do not send me from you!"

"What would you have?" he replied, sternly, "you cannot remain here. This part of the country will soon be the scene of war. You have obtained now what you wished. This is the consequence of your romantic folly. Not a word! I know all! Hold yourself in readiness. I cannot give you more than an hour. Pack up such things as you cannot spare, nothing more; the cities of the Crimea or Odessa will furnish you anew. A *Pulk** of tried Cossacks will lead you safely over the mountains, and keep off waylayers. Farewell, be ready!"

Heloise was about to throw herself on his breast, but he tore himself forcibly away. "In an hour," he said, "I shall be with you again."

The poor girl was as if stunned, but she was obliged to obey her father's orders. She quickly made the necessary arrangements, and took leave of the weeping Nanny, who could not accompany her, as she was just expecting the return of her husband from his journey. One of her Russian maids was to go with her. In an hour a carriage with four horses stopped before her door, and soon after, the general made his appearance. "Quick, Heloise; you have not a moment to lose."

"I am ready, father; but let me not part from you without your forgiveness."

She was almost overcome by emotion, yet she controlled

* Company.

herself; she knew how her father hated every outbreak of feeling. But two large tears started to her eyes, when he silently embraced her.

It seemed as if he too gave way, to-day, for a moment, to a deeper emotion. He pressed her close to him. "I forgive you," he said at length, and his voice trembled. "You could not do otherwise without burdening your conscience. Be always so pure—be always so honest! God bless you!"

He conquered his emotion and gave her his arm. Oh, how gladly would she have embraced him once more! But while he gave her a letter to the governor-general, he said: "When we will meet again, God only knows! As soon as I can make a certain plan for your future, you shall hear from me."

"Oh, father, write to me before that—if only a few lines, in which you assure your Heloise that you still love her."

"Of what use are idle words? Are you not the flower of my thorny life? Who knows how soon fate, or the humors of my sovereign, will bring the moment when I can enjoy it without prejudicing my honor?"

With these words he lifted her into the carriage, and mounted the horse which a groom was holding in readiness. Accompanied by him and several officers, Heloise left the town of Jekaterinodar, where every body ran to the windows to witness her departure. Not far from the last houses, a large body of Cossacks were awaiting her, headed by the *Ataman* and *Yessaul.** "Both," said the count to Heloise, "I know to be faithful and brave. They will bring you safely to Ghelendshik, at the risk of their lives. *Ataman*," he addressed the bearded captain—a brave, stalwart figure, who, carelessly thrown upon a little uncombed horse, looked boldly

* Captain and lieutenant.

and unconcernedly out upon the world—"I confide to you the dearest treasure that I possess on earth."

"Fear nothing, general," replied he, coolly, adjusting a girth: "they will not cut off both my arms at once; and as long as Peter Pulawski can hold his sword in his left hand, the robbers shall not take a bandbox from thy daughter."

The count turned, with a similar injunction, to the lieutenant—a somewhat younger man, bearded like the other, but of gigantic form and powerful figure—"*Yessaul*, I know that I can depend upon your bravery; but be also cautious. Have your eyes everywhere. You know these bandits come upon one like a thief in the night."

"General, trust to me; only over my corpse shall a hair of thy child's head be touched."

Made less calm, by such assurances, than anxious by these necessary measures of precaution, our young heroine rolled along, surrounded on all sides by the trusty Cossacks. The train moved on rapidly, in a western direction, along the northern shore of the Cuban, for about three miles. When they passed the camp, Heloise observed a general stirring in it. The scene was greatly changed; more than half the tents had already been taken down; the baggage-wagons stood in readiness, and all was business and excitement. A raft, which had been constructed to carry provision-carts over to the forts, and was guarded day and night by a strong detachment of soldiers, conveyed her carriage over the Cuban; the little horses of the Cossacks, which could swim almost as well as they could run, carried the latter over.

The actual road to the Aboun valley, through which Heloise was to travel to Ghelendshik, a fortress on the Black Sea, runs from the Olga *Stanitza* along the northern Cuban shore. But the *Ataman*, by the count's orders, shortened the journey considerably, by crossing the Cuban sooner, traversing the broad valley in a south-western direction, and

then entering, by a side-pass, not far from the Russian fortress Aboun, upon the valley of that name. True, on this road many a torrent had to be crossed, the rocky bed of many a rushing stream to be passed over, where the carriage could only be held upright by the supporting pikes of the Cossacks. Neither was the journey through the gently-rising plain entirely free from danger, for it was inhabited by Shapzuks, and the travellers could see from the road their little villages, bordered with gardens. But it was important to gain time, so that the squadron of the governor-general might not have left Ghelendshik before Heloise reached the fort.

Our heroine had been wonderfully strengthened by her father's parting words. He forgave her—he felt that she had done right. What he had said last had sounded mysterious, but there gleamed from it a ray of hope of soon meeting him again. Thus she had at least gained sufficient calmness not to be unsusceptible to the enchanting beauty of the country around her. Refreshed by the violent rain, the broad, luxurious valley lay before her in emerald brightness. Now the road ascended; first undulating, and then without falling again, it passed over a wooded ridge of hills, so as to lead through a gap into the elevated valley of the Aboun. On the opposite, western side of the latter stream—which was of a brilliant blue, and wider than any which they had crossed—on a hill thickly overgrown with woods, and of indifferent height, lay the fortress of Aboun. Heloise, who had brought very different ideas of a fort from her country, observed, with surprise, a square of wooden barracks, inclosed by several high ramparts of earth, and moats, which only received a martial aspect from the thousands of armed warriors that were standing on the walls to see the strangers pass, and the quarter of a hundred of cannon. A painful emotion filled Heloise's heart when she heard that more than half the garrison consisted of Poles who had been pressed into service.

Twilight had already set in, and by far the most dangerous part of the journey still lay before them. The train halted for a few minutes, to give the horses the necessary rest and refreshment. Heloise here had to exchange her easy carriage for a little open Circassian wagon, called an *Arba*, the only kind of vehicle which could be used on the mountain road that led up the valley, and over which their journey was now to take them. For the beautiful Abounvalley, which, on this side of the fort bearing its name, spreads out so as almost to form a basin, beyond it begins already to contract, until, at length, on a steep rocky ledge, it disappears in the narrow chasm from which a torrent leaps forth in fury. This stream, which, dividing already at its source into several branches, breaks its way into as many green, thickly-wooded defiles, here suddenly precipitates itself noisily from a steep height, to flow quietly afterwards, as if exhausted, the straight, shortest way to the main stream; there leaps in graceful windings over stones and gigantic old roots of trees, to hasten on at last to the same end by a circuitous route, and finally, united, a little above Fort Aboun, to a pure, clear stream, to glide through smiling meadows and fields towards the Cuban.

It was along the main stream of this river, that their route led, up the bed of the valley, to the other fort by which the Russians had endeavored to secure for themselves the road through this valley to the coast. The walls of the latter grew higher and steeper, rarely threatening and bare, but overgrown in most places with oaks and beeches like those of Heloise's fatherland, and a quantity of other species of trees, such as she had never before seen. Nature here has less of wildness, than of a stern, sacred solemnity. But the many desolate homesteads, and ruined enclosures, which lay scattered over the slopes of the hills, in spots where the woods had been cleared—for the valley had been deserted by its inhabitants, since the Russians had taken up their

abode there—gave the glorious scenes of nature, nevertheless, an appearance of waste and desolation.

It had grown entirely dark, when the party arrived at Nicolajeffsky, the second fort, which lies a little more than four miles beyond Aboun. Here the leader of the escort resolved to await the break of day, protected by the cannon of the fortress. The Cossacks encamped, without laying off their arms, close to their horses. Heloise was induced, with her maid, to ascend the hill, so as to take a bed in the fort. The commandant received his general's daughter with unbounded respect. But Heloise was shocked at the pale, unhealthy appearance of the soldiers whom she saw in passing. "Poor fellows," said the *Yessaul*, compassionately, when she remarked this to him the next morning; "they are like prisoners up there. The valley is narrow, and throws out bad vapors. The salt meat that they get is not always in the best condition, and the bread often mouldy. And then lying still so from morning till night—no one could keep well with that. And if they do go out, they are received with balls, and treated to them until they are in again. Yesterday, the sentinels that were to guard the cattle grazing on the slope of the hills, were carried off, together with the flocks. I should not like to be in the skin of one of the garrison!"

When Heloise, at sunrise, was summoned to depart, she saw, from the preparations which had been made, the altered character of the road before her. Instead of horses, oxen were to draw her wagon; for a tremendous height had to be climbed, in order to reach the west side of the ridge, even through the most accessible pass. Two small cannons had also been added to her escort, one of which was drawn on in advance, and the other in the rear of the train. A few hours from Nicolajeffsky, the party turned into one of the side-valleys, which came down upon their way from the South-West. The peaks of the rocky walls rose up more and more

wildly; roots of trees, boldly and strangely intertwined, ran along their path, rendering it more and more difficult—while immense creepers, reaching to the riders' saddles, often threatened to obstruct it entirely. Gigantic trees, overthrown by the recent storm, had to be cleared away by the Cossacks with great expense of time and strength, before it was possible for Heloise's wagon to proceed. The sharp morning breeze blew over the country with icy coldness, and the forest night hung over the valley so densely and darkly, that the red, cold rays of the rising sun could penetrate it only in single brilliant gleams. The travellers were decoyed into the strangest, most unexpected turns, by the ascending defile. Now a high, black wall rose up before them, and Heloise had just observed that the foremost riders disappeared to the left, where she had least anticipated a road.

At this moment, the train came to a full stop, and a strange, mysterious agitation, which arose all around, gave Heloise a quick suspicion of the terrible cause. A loudly reverberating discharge of pistols, and the dreadful cry: "Circassians, Circassians!" which suddenly sounded through the ranks, told her all. In a single moment hundreds of swords were bared, hundreds of muskets raised to take aim. From before, from behind, from never-suspected side-defiles, they emerged—all pushing towards the one point, Heloise's wagon, which was instantly shielded by a tenfold wall of Cossacks, who kept off the assailants with sharp swords and pointed spears. At both ends of the train, too, a desperate conflict raged. On the first, unexpected attack, the Circassians had possessed themselves of the foremost cannon; the artillery-men of the other were thrown down, trampled upon. But no fire could be used, without destroying friend and foe at once, against the thick coil of combatants which moved around Heloise's carriage in mortal conflict. Here and there one of the athletic highlanders threw himself,

striking out with his sharp sword in his right and the murderous dagger in his left, into the densest crowd, not caring for certain death, if he could only drag ten others with him to destruction. But again and again, the *Ataman's* cry drew together new faithful ones to fill the gap. Suddenly a ball whistled past Heloise, into the back of the brave captain, and threw him from his horse. For a moment there was a broad chasm in her wall of defence, and through it she saw the flash of a terrible sword—yes, it seemed to her as if she also saw a pair of still more terrible eyes glaring fiercely through it. Nearer and nearer the mass pressed round her —closer and closer. Suddenly—and an unspeakable terror seized her—she saw a Circassian chief, high on horseback, break through the faithful wall which had shielded her until now: she recognized Arslan! A fearful cry of horror broke from the unhappy girl. But the gigantic form of the *Yessaul* threw itself in the way, and a murderous struggle commenced between the two, while, instead of the living wall of brave combatants, the wagon of the half-unconscious Heloise was soon surrounded by a bank of corpses. Such Cossacks as were left, sought their safety in flight.

The *Yessaul* alone struggled on fiercely. Suddenly the cry was heard from before them: "Russians, Russians! help is near!" and a fresh, fierce fire announced the deliverers. But at this sound, the Circassian was seized with a wild rage; with practised skill he seized his hidden dagger, and plunged it desperately into the heart of his opponent, who seized him with convulsive grasp. The *Yessaul* staggered, and was drawing his furious assailant with him by his death-gripe, but his arms sank, and in his fall, true to his word, he sheltered his general's child with his broad, gigantic body. But a pair of powerful arms dashed him aside, and tore her from her seat. Arslan's eye glared at her with horror-awakening passion. "Help! help!" she cried, for already she heard,

she saw, the deliverers approaching—already the combat was recommencing. But in an instant he raised her up and lifted her upon his snorting steed. A companion was hastily throwing a shawl around her waist, to attach her to the rider, but despair gave her strength for a moment. She resisted violently, tearing every thing off, so that Arslan, with a gripe which betrayed the warrior rather than the lover, and a glance of loving rage, took hold of and held her until the shawl was secured. This done—and all was the work of a moment—he pressed his spurs into his horse's flanks, and galloped furiously away with his prize into a side-valley.

But behind them resounded horses' hoofs, and loudly and fiercely a voice was heard calling after them, whose tones penetrated to the inmost soul of the half-fainting girl. Arslan would not hear—the prize was his. He flew along like a whirlwind, relying upon the unsurpassed swiftness of his steed. But a shot was heard—and another. The horse staggered. With desperate rage it was about to take a fresh start for a faster flight, but it broke down; its slender legs were shattered. The pursuer, with skilful aim, had sacrificed it for its master. Arslan had sprung from it before it fell, and, dividing the shawl with his sharp dagger, he lifted down the unconscious girl. He swung his burden over his shoulder, and was about to conceal himself with her in the depth of the forest. But the pursuer was now on the spot, and behind him many other horsemen. All threw themselves upon the one. There, in despair, he dropped his prize—his sword flew from its scabbard, and many an opponent recoiled from the furious blows which he dealt out. One only—it was he who had killed Arslan's steed—grasped the insensible girl and bore her from the crowd, while his companions, with merciless blows, ten against one, cut down the Lion of Circassia.

By the road-side, stretched on the soft greensward, lay Heloise, surrounded by her deliverers, her friends. She lay

motionless, lifeless. The consciousness of bloody danger floated around her soul, vaguely and darkly. One knelt by her side, one bent over her with anxious gaze, with half-despairing heart. "Heloise, my Heloise!" whispered a gentle, loving voice. At that moment she opened her eyes—she looked into two other eyes—they were the faithful, loving ones of Felix. Hers closed anew, and a long, deathlike unconsciousness followed.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

Several days had elapsed. At Fort Ghelendshik, in the commandant's house, the curtains were closely drawn before the windows of one of the best apartments, and silence was strictly enjoined on the domestics at work in the passages. On a camp-bed lay, with cheeks bloodless and white as snow, but enjoying, for the first time after a raging fever, a refreshing sleep, the form of a lovely woman.

Seated in a corner of the room, with their backs to the bed, two men were carrying on, in a low voice, an earnest conversation: "You know all now, uncle," said the younger of the two, softly. "Nothing but a fatal fascination, and Heloise's peculiar maidenly pride, have placed us in this cruel situation. Oh! if she had but spoken sooner—it would have been my greatest happiness—it would have been my ambition, to lead her to you as my wife, and, with her, to ask your blessing!"

"I can well believe it, Felix," replied the general, for he it was whom the other was addressing. "Such a pearl would be rejected by no one, who had a suspicion of the possibility of possessing it. But the mischief is done, and all that we can do is to make up for it as well as we can. Heloise's disease is broken, the danger is past. My duty calls me hence; I could hardly spare even these two days from service. She is yours, my dear fellow—take my paternal blessing with her. In a few days her youth and constitution will have conquered the disease so far, that you can take her to Kaffa without danger. A barque will convey you there, which I will send here. In the Crimea you will find German colonies and Protestant clergymen. Be united to Heloise without delay, and

return to Germany as soon as you can possibly do so. Here are the papers that you need, to be married and to travel in this country. Here are checks. I am acquainted with the authorities of New Russia. It was only by an unhappy chance that the governor-general had left Ghelendshik an hour before the belated messenger, whom the poor *Ataman* had sent from Aboun, arrived. They will do all to assist you, and to forward you to the Danube, where you can return to Germany with the Austrian steamer. "Farewell, my son," he added, rising and embracing him, "make my Heloise happy! If you will follow the advice of an experienced man, live on your estates—retire from court—do not give room to ambition—avoid the service of princes; that of one's country is less to be found there than here, where there is at least but one will, while there the immense chasm between prince and people grows wider and wider. As a free German nobleman and rich proprietor, you can still be a happy man there."

"I shall be so as Heloise's husband, father! But you, uncle?"

"It is my firm belief," answered the count, forcing a smile, "that my existence was somewhat spoilt from the beginning. If I could commence again, I would do better. But now that I am once in course, I must strive with my utmost powers to reach the goal."

He approached his daughter's bed, and regarded the pale, heavenly figure with the deepest emotion. The image of Antonia, his once so fervently beloved wife, which had long since receded from his memory, mingled strangely with that of Heloise. He bent over the sleeping girl, to kiss her—and a scalding tear fell upon her cheek.

She awoke. She looked at him with bright eyes, full of astonishment. "Is it you, father?" she asked, endeavoring to raise herself up. He supported her with his strong arm. "Have I been dreaming, father? Have I been sick? Ah! I must be so still," she added, and sank back exhausted.

"You are recovering, I hope. Try to recollect. But cast only one glance into the past, and then turn your eye to the future. You were attacked by bandits—you were rescued. And do you know who was your deliverer?"

"Father, can it be that it was not a dream? My Felix, my brother is here?"

Felix was kneeling by the bed: "Your husband, my Heloise! *Your* father will also be *my* father. Pardon your erring Felix!"

The count would not allow any explanations, but here Felix had known Heloise's heart better than he, for a faint color passed over her face, when she called him brother.

The exhausted girl soon fell asleep again, and the count, to avoid all agitation, availed himself of this time to part from his daughter, after pressing a farewell kiss upon her forehead. He returned over the mountains to the head of the army, to where, in the western basin of the valley, the flame of war was raging more destructively than ever. For the minds of the Abazaks, first by Arslan's endeavors, and then by the death of the young hero, had become most violently incensed against the Russian government; and the name of him, who, in their eyes, represented it, was used by them, after that unfortunate visit to the camp on the Cuban, as an emblem, not only of oppression, but also of treachery and diabolical intrigue.*

A faithful attendant. Felix sat for many a day and night by the bedside of his beloved sister-bride, until she had at length regained strength enough to proceed to Kaffa, in the barque which the count sent in due time. Here, in the former capital of the old Tartar empire, now the flourishing seat of commerce, civilization afforded ample means of advancing Heloise's reco-

* The reader is requested not to take the unnecessary trouble of seeking for real names for the above-mentioned persons, as any historical foundation which this tale may have, has, intentionally, been mingled with fiction to avoid the least approach to personality.

very. In the church of the lovely village of Zurichthal,* a few hours from Kaffa, under the admiring gaze of the surrounding crowd of Swiss and German countrymen, a venerable clergyman laid Heloise's trembling hand in that of the happy Felix.

Many days passed, ere both realized that the mysterious dispensation, which had brought them together so unexpectedly, was more than a blissful dream. The benevolent, quiet, softening hand of time alone, which gave them the delicious certainty of possession, calmed the excitement of Heloise's nerves, which, on that day of horror, had been completely shattered—and brought Felix to the blissful, grateful consciousness, that kind Providence had made him the happiest of men.

He often wished to explain to Heloise how every thing happened, but she would say: "I pray you, be silent, I will hear nothing yet. I have you, and I am yours, that is enough." In the cabin of the steamboat, only, when they were travelling up the Danube, and the hope of soon breathing their native air, called up native scenes before their souls' eye—when they were quietly sitting side by side, and hand in hand, as in the years of their childhood, and, among the bustle and crowd of strange faces around them, they yet felt so alone, and all in all to each other—then only Heloise said: "Now I believe I can hear all, my Felix, now tell your story."

And Felix commenced:

"Heloise, no tongue can tell what I felt, when I returned, and you were gone. My inmost heart had long grown clear to me. I had learnt to know Emma. I had long ago ceased to love her. Pride, honor, want of courage still bound me to her. What shall I say? My heart was lacerated! Oh, Heloise, why did you not speak? I felt ashamed when I thought of you—I knew that you despised Emma—that you, the pure, the heavenly, could not but despise her. When I heard of your departure, I thought you had gone because it

* A Swiss colony.

pained you too deeply to see your best friend, the friend whose guardian-angel you have been since his earliest childhood, chained to a worthless object. But just then they gave me your letter. I was annihilated. Light came into my heart. Your image, your name alone, had possession of it. And should the wish of my departed mother, the last command of her dying lips, which, like every injunction which she ever gave me, showed me the road, the only road to happiness, remain unfulfilled? Long, terrible years of misery lay before me. But my honor, my integrity, bound me indissolubly to Emma. You know that the wedding-day was fixed. The guests were invited.

"The state of my mind probably made me any thing but amiable. Emma often wept and reproached me with not loving her any more. Ought I not at that time to have frankly told her all, Heloise? I did once actually make the attempt, but she broke out into such a passion of grief and anger, that I endeavored to calm her by assurances of my constancy. Of my love I could no longer assure her, for I knew that her suspicion was just. Oh, Heloise, your pure soul cannot conceive the state of mine at that time, and for months before. A vague sense of Emma's worthlessness had already come over me in the earlier part of our acquaintance; since Angern's arrival, it grew more distinct, but at the same time obstinacy, that same stubborn obstinacy which has so often tortured you as a child, which awakened many an anxious feeling in the heart of my beloved mother, the desire to hold fast what I had once grasped—grew stronger and stronger within me. There were times, when I did not know whether it was hatred or love which I felt for Emma. I even remember one moment, when she was clasped to my heart, in which I felt as if I must hate her. You shudder! Forgive me, Heloise!

"After that scene, however, I understood myself perfectly. I utterly despised her; I saw her but seldom, and

when I saw her, my thoughts were far away. This may have been the reason that I entirely overlooked the infamous turn which Emma's intercourse with the Spanish adventurer who instructed her in his language and in singing, had taken: a turn, which, as I afterwards learnt, was known to half the town before I discovered the secret which saved me.

"One evening—it was two days before the one appointed for our marriage—the sense of my misery grew too powerful within me. 'I will go to her,' I thought; 'I will ask her if she wishes my hand without my heart. So much I owe even to her. There shall at least be truth between us, if there is no love.' It was one of those evenings, in which, in our northern climate, Winter, even long after he has bid adieu, revenges himself once more on the usurper, Spring. Rain and hail fell violently from the sky. I therefore wrapped myself up closely in my large cloak, and placed, instead of my hat, a travelling-cap on my head. When I was still some distance from Emma's house, I remarked that a servant stood before the door, with her apron over her head, and, in various ways, manifested great impatience. Before I had even reached her, she cried, pertly: 'Well, this is fine! I always thought lovers were mighty fiery in your country. But patience must be their virtue more than mine! To leave a good Christian waiting here a whole hour! There'—giving me a paper—and with the words: 'what a weather!' she slipped back into the house.

"I looked at the paper. By the light of a lantern I saw that it was a letter, without direction, and unsealed. I opened it—I saw Spanish words and recognized Emma's handwriting. A suspicion flashed across my mind. She wrote:

'My Eginhard!*—It is decided—love has conquered—thou hast conquered. But let us give up the cars, they can

* In allusion to the romantic history of Emma, the daughter of Charlemagne, and her lover Eginhard, his secretary.

only carry us a short distance, and I shudder at the excessively vulgar image which they present, in forcing flying and pursued lovers into the company of all the tradesmen and business people who are travelling now, only for the arrangement of their miserable affairs. Steeds, my knight, steeds must lend us their wings, and dark night her veil. Be on the spot punctually at seven. I shall send over a trunk and some boxes early in the afternoon, apparently to have Fernow arrange and alter the articles which they contain, as I have often done before. So that this cannot raise any suspicion. Order the carriage to the back-alley. Ah! my Eginhard! My heart trembles, the heart which beats for you, the heart of your EMMA.'

"Heloise, this letter set me free, and yet I was seized with an inward rage. I went home, and resolved not to be too hasty. Early the next morning I called on Emma. Her manner was as usual, but she said she had a great deal to do, and begged me to return in the afternoon. The idea crossed my mind that the maid had perhaps accidentally taken one of her mistress's Spanish exercises instead of one of her own love-letters. But I knew Mrs. Fernow, as also the back-alley. The former was the name of the milliner, in whose upper back-room, which could be approached by a flight of stairs from a side-alley, Emma had formerly often met me, and whom I had amply paid for that privilege. Could Emma be so shameless? It was impossible!

"In the afternoon I watched Fernow's house. I saw the trunk and the boxes carried over. At seven o'clock I stole up the back-stairs into the well-known room, for the key was still in my possession; there stood the trunk, the boxes. At this moment I heard cautious steps in the passage which joined the room in which I was, to that of Mrs. Fernow. I quickly let down the calico window-curtain and stepped behind

it. Emma, in a travelling-dress, and Fernow, entered the apartment. 'He is not yet here,' said Emma. 'I wish he would not come,' replied Fernow, 'you are running to ruin, Miss.' Before Emma could answer, I stepped forward. Emma uttered a scream, 'Treachery!' she cried, rushing passionately at Mrs. Fernow. You will willingly spare me the description of the scene which followed. Emma, for whom, to speak frankly, I at this moment felt more contempt than hatred, endeavored, by entreaties, to obtain from me the promise of concealing from her grandparents how far she had gone in her disgraceful error, and of taking her love for Collado as a pretext for the rupture. But I informed her that my duty towards her grandparents demanded that I should request them to watch her more closely, and prevent her from carrying on a third love-affair on that spot. I left her sobbing hysterically, and wrote to the colonel the same evening. I acquainted him in a few words with the particulars of the case, and pronounced my engagement with his granddaughter broken. The business part of the affair was easily arranged, as the marriage-contract was to be signed only on the morning of the wedding. Pretended illness of the bride had to serve as pretext for countermanding the invitations sent out.

"Oh Heloise, I was now free from my galling chains, but I was not the least happier: for could I—might I still lay the slightest claim to possessing you, you my only true love? Where were you, where had you taken refuge? For a day or two I shut myself up, in gloomy meditation. Then my resolve was taken. I applied for my dismission, and as this could not be obtained so quickly, the ambassador, at my urgent request, at length gave me leave of absence to travel. By this time the news of our prince's death had reached us; perhaps the minister suspected how matters stood. I hastened to St. Petersburg. Here, indeed, I learnt from our ambassador, that you had gone to your father, but no one

knew any thing of his being still at Jekaterinodar. Some said he was in Caucasia—others that he was stationed in Daghestan, and was subduing the Tartar tribes—others still assured me that they had heard of his fighting against the Lesghians. My mind was soon made up; I went to Odessa to learn more definite news, and to proceed by water to the east shore of the Black Sea—for I was determined to seek you out, wherever you might be.

"At Sympheropolis I learnt from the governor-general, to whom I had an introduction, and who received me with the greatest kindness, that your father was still in his camp at Jekaterinodar. Fortune was suddenly beginning to favor me again, for Woronzoff was just making preparations for a coasting-voyage, on which many noble ladies and gentlemen were to accompany him, as on a pleasure-trip—for even here, so near the scene of action, false reports had led to the belief that the Caucasus was conquered. The governor invited me to join his party, and I gratefully availed myself of this opportunity of approaching you. I intended to land at Anapa, from whence I hoped easily to reach Jekaterinodar. But when we approached the shore, and saw the heights covered with armed Circassians, we were quickly convinced that we were touching upon the enemy's ground. This induced the governor to land at Anapa in company of a few officers only. I, meanwhile, had his promise to put me ashore at Ghelendshik, the second landing, and as several ladies, who—as they assured me—had, during the whole voyage, recognized in me the unhappy lover, took me under their special protection, and interceded earnestly for me with the governor, he promised to give me a letter to the commandant, so that he might furnish me with a detachment, to escort me over the mountains to my uncle.

"He was true to his word. On his departure from Ghelendshik, I remained there, full of impatience to start. But

on the day on which God restored you to me, quite early, a Cossack came galloping up. By great exertion, and on various by-ways, he had escaped the shots of the Circassians. He came as a messenger from the *Ataman*, to transmit the order of your father, the general, to send an additional escort of a battalion of riflemen to meet his daughter, who was on the way to Ghelendshik.

"His daughter on the way to Ghelendshik! Imagine what a thrill these words sent through me. The good God was leading you yourself to meet me! I could hardly realize the happiness that awaited me. We were instantly in readiness to march. But we had hardly been a few hours on the way, before we were met by breathless fugitives: 'The general's daughter has been attacked by Circassians—the *Ataman* has fallen—the bandits are the victors, and will carry her off!' A glowing zeal to rescue such a prize from the hated enemy, urged all onward with the speed of lightning. I was driven by despair. We reach the scene of combat; I see the atrocious robber dragging you away; I follow—but how can my ball strike him without injuring you? God Almighty guides my hand—the horse breaks down under him, as I had intended, and—you are mine once more!"

Who was more grateful to God than Heloise! What would have become of her, if she had been carried off into the mountains, where Russian foot never penetrated? Even if Arslan's passion had at length been broken by her resistance, would she not there have been for ever lost to her friends? And yet—she could not help it: tear after tear would start to her eye when she thought of Arslan—of his betrayed affection—of his horrible death!

She longed to hear from Isabella, from Angern; but the journey to the capital would have taken them too much out of the way to their home. She resolved, therefore, to write again, and to be satisfied, for the present, with an answer to

her letter. But when, one day, the young couple, while the horses were being changed, were stopping before a post station, Heloise thought she distinctly recognized, in the lovely children's heads which were peeping, one over the other, out of the window of a newly-arrived travelling-carriage, Isabella's little girls. "If they were not in deep mourning," she thought —"Can the old lady—?" At this moment a lady in black, a delicate figure, stepped from the house to the open carriage-door, and Heloise heard plainly Isabella's voice, saying:

"It is a pleasant house; come, darlings, we will stay here to dinner."

Felix sprang from the carriage and lifted out Heloise. Trembling with joy, she hastened towards the lady in mourning, who was already surrounded by little fairy figures. It was Isabella.

After the first fervent greeting, Heloise, with an inquiring glance at the dress of Isabella and the children, said: "But how, my dear friend, must I meet you?"

Isabella's countenance grew serious, and a faint color rose to her cheeks as she answered: "I have been a widow for three months."

"So the baron is dead? And these children are fatherless?"

"They are, Heloise. The baron died a sudden and frivolous death—frivolous as his life. He died in a duel at the gaming table. In his last moments the feeling of his mistaken, empty, wasted life, came over him with fearful force, and at the door of death, he already heard the voice of the judge, who was calling the unprofitable servant to his last account. Oh, Heloise, his death was fearful!"

"Poor Isabella!"

"You have indeed a right to call me so, for it has lacerated my heart to see *him* depart thus, whom I once, with a pure, childish heart, chose for the companion of my life. It

as if the extinguished spark had suddenly been bl-

into life again. I hoped a journey would do me and the children good, before Winter, the gaoler, confines us in his prison. And then—it was not only for that, that I undertook this journey. I will make you a confession. I wished to withdraw from the renewed attentions of my friend, the friend whom you rejected, foolish child!"

"To withdraw from them, Isabella? Has not Nature created *you*, you yourself, for Angern?"

"So it is, my Heloise; but the lips which have touched the icy ones of a beloved dead friend, must be warmed again by life before they may receive the kiss of love. Leave me to myself! Time will make all even."

Heloise felt that she was right. But it was a sweet hope to her, once to see Angern and Isabella united.

She herself went with Felix to Waldeck. Felix followed his uncle's advice. He retired from service, and, with the zealous, loving assistance of Heloise, the happiness of the subjects whose guidance God had intrusted to him, became the aim of his life. The public papers now and then brought news of Heloise's father, and often in a manner, the just severity of which pained her deeply. From time to time, too, a few affectionate lines from his hand would find their way to the happy couple. He promised soon to fulfil his daughter's fervent wish, and satisfy the increasing longing of his own heart for his fatherland. But untiringly the wheel turned round, which drew him into the whirlpool of worldly life, of ambitious, never-satisfied striving—and when last we heard of Heloise, she was still longing, in vain, to show her father his three lovely grandchildren.

THE END.

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